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The National Evaluation of State Victims of Crime Act Assistance and Compensation Programs: Trends and Strategies for the Future

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Abstract

This report presents the Urban Institute's and the San Diego Association of Government's national evaluation of victims' compensation and assistance programs funded in part with federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds. This study was sponsored by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) with funds from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC). The purpose of the study was to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of victim compensation and VOCA assistance programs at helping to deliver a seamless web of support to assist victims in their struggle to recover from the financial, emotional, physical, and psychological effects of criminal victimization. We approached this task through telephone surveys, site visit interviews, and focus groups with state administrators; members of oversight bodies; victim advocacy groups; VOCA-funded local service providers; victims who claimed compensation; and victims who accessed VOCA-funded direct service programs.

From 1986 to 2002, OVC has disbursed to state compensation and assistance programs over \$3.7 billion in collections from federal offenders into the Crime Victims Fund (CVF). These funds have supported direct payments to victims, survivors, and providers for crime-related expenses (compensation), as well as thousands of community-based direct service providers who assist victims of a broad range of crimes with a variety of needs (assistance).

We found that many compensation programs have enhanced their client-service orientation in recent years, developing innovations to improve policies and case processing and outcomes for victim claimants. We recommend that this trend be continued through ongoing expansion of services, which should be feasible with recently increased federal allocations as long as state budget crises and other recent trends do not negatively impact program budgets. Programs should continue to develop administrative activities, such as needs assessment, strategic planning, coordination, and automation, to enhance client services. Outreach to underserved and unserved populations through direct service providers can be very useful for cultivating eligible claims and assisting in claims processing. Streamlined procedures to improve case processing should be continued. Although most claims are approved, methods for explaining denials and appeals options when a claim is denied may need improvement.

State programs administering VOCA assistance funds and community-level direct service providers have been functioning well under difficult funding circumstances. Program clients who participated in our survey reported that VOCA-funded services met many of their needs and were very satisfactory. It should be useful for future efforts to focus on making funds available for victim services while providing stability in year-to-year allocations; providing additional support for state administrators to expand their administrative activities; allowing subgrantees to access VOCA funds for critical administrative activities such as coordination efforts; addressing direct service programs' operational challenges, such as staff burnout, limits on usefulness of volunteers, and burdensome reporting requirements; and expanding direct services to serve

unserved and underserved victims, and to address victims' unmet needs, including needs for justice system advocacy, needs assessments and service referrals, and financial counseling.

Coordination between compensation and VOCA assistance programs, and among VOCA and other victim service funding streams, is critical to ensure efficient program operations and effective services to victims. Coordination can occur through such means as cross-training of compensation and assistance staff and provision of referral materials and other resources, and collaborative involvement in other agencies' decision-making processes.

Executive Summary

Victims of crime must struggle with a wide variety of physical, psychological, emotional, and financial problems caused by the crime they suffered. Victims may be left with physical injuries; the need to improve security measures or even move to avoid being victimized again; feelings of fear, anger, grief, and even shame; bills to pay for medical, counseling, and funeral services; lost income from missing work due to the crime, the time needed to get medical or other services to help in the recovery, and the time to participate in the criminal case; and long-term or permanent loss of support due to the victim's death or disability. Fortunately, resources are available to help many victims recover, and there are various sources of funding for these resources. This report presents a detailed examination of programs supported in part by one major federal funding source, Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds.

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) administers the Crime Victims' Fund (CVF) established by the 1984 Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). Collections into the CVF come solely from fines, fees, and penalties imposed on those found guilty of federal offenses; no tax dollars are involved. OVC has disbursed over \$3.7 billion from the CVF in formula grants to state victims' compensation and assistance programs from 1986 to 2002. These funds have supported direct payments to victims and providers for crime-related expenses, as well as thousands of community-based direct service providers across the nation who assist victims of a broad range of crimes with a variety of needs. These include law enforcement- and prosecution-based victim advocates, domestic violence programs, rape crisis centers, child abuse programs, programs for homicide survivors, and programs for victims of drunk driving, hate crimes, elder abuse, and many others. Despite this level of investment, no broad-based research has yet documented how the funds are managed and how well they are put to use.

To this end, OVC provided funding to the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), who commissioned The Urban Institute and the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) to conduct a national evaluation of state victims' compensation and assistance programs supported in part with VOCA funds. The goals of this evaluation are to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of state programs at helping to deliver a seamless web of support to assist victims in their struggle to recover from the financial, emotional, physical, and psychological effects of criminal victimization. This study and another study on victims' needs and help sources grew out of a workshop on victim research sponsored by NIJ and OVC in 1997.

The evaluation had several phases and gathered information from state administrators; advocates, members of advisory bodies, and others who provide input on state program administration; local service providers; and victims who have accessed compensation and assistance services. Getting input from stakeholders at various levels allowed us to examine the effects of state policies on local service delivery and how these policies, relationships, and coordination issues impact victims. Our methods included a phone survey of all state compensation and assistance administrators; site visits to six states to interview state

administrators, members of oversight bodies, and local VOCA-funded assistance providers; focus groups with assistance program clients; and phone surveys with compensation claimants and assistance clients. The six states that hosted the in-depth analysis – California, Idaho, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Vermont, and Wisconsin – were selected to represent diversity on a number of administrative, demographic, and geographic factors.

Prior research, program standards, and recommendations for future developments helped frame the issues for this research and provided an evaluative lens through which to view the research tasks. This report presents policy and practice information obtained from our research, and offers recommendations for improvements to policies and operations. This report is comprehensive, including all research tasks, findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Victim assistance and compensation programs serve different functions, use different operating procedures, are often administered by different state agencies, and may serve different groups of victims. In this executive summary we therefore have separate sections on each of these programs. Each section presents an integrated summary of all our work on that program. Issues of coordination between the two programs are discussed in the final section of the executive summary.

CRIME VICTIMS' COMPENSATION

Crime can leave victims and their families with bills for medical, counseling, and funeral services; with lost wages from missing work to receive services or participate in the criminal justice system; with long-term or permanent loss of support for the family because the victim was killed or left disabled; and with the financial costs of a number of other consequences of the crime, such as the need to improve security measures or even move, to avoid repeat victimization. Some victims have means to meet these expenses, such as private insurance policies, employment-related benefits, or access to public benefits. However, many victims cannot pay crime-related expenses on their own. Crime victims' compensation is available to some of these victims, so that they do not have to bear the financial burdens of crime. Compensation was the earliest public response to victims of crime, with the first program established in 1965. Compensation programs are run by state governments with state and federal funding; all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and three territories now have compensation programs. Compensation is housed in a wide variety of state agencies, including independent agencies, various criminal justice agencies, human service agencies, labor agencies, and financial administration agencies.

Compensation programs make payments to victims, their survivors, or those who have provided services (such as hospitals, mental health counselors, or funeral homes) necessitated by the crime. These programs are funded by allocations from the federal Crime Victims Fund (CVF), administered by OVC, and by state funds. Like the CVF, which is offender-generated revenue, most of the states raise their funds from criminal offenders rather than tax revenues.

Federal allocations have exceeded \$1 billion from 1986 to 2002, with annual amounts increasing by about 400 percent over this period. In 2002, the average allocation to states was \$1.7 million, and the median amount was \$630,000. Allocations for FY 2003 will rise sharply from 2002, since the federal payout formula – a percentage of state expenditures – increased by half, from 40 percent of state expenditures to 60 percent, under the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001.

The Use of Compensation Funds

Both federal and state laws and guidelines govern how compensation funds are used. OVC guidelines provide that federal funds are for victims of state and federal violent crimes with injury (physical or otherwise, at each state’s discretion), and for certain counseling services to victims of nonviolent crimes. Federal funds may be used for medical/dental expenses, mental health counseling, funeral and burial costs, economic support (lost wages and loss of support), and crime scene clean-up expenses, but not for property losses. Compensation programs must promote victim cooperation with the reasonable requests of law enforcement authorities, and may not deny compensation because of a victim’s relationship with the offender, except to prevent unjust enrichment of the offender.

The states stipulate further that compensation may be denied to victims whose “contributory misconduct” played a role in the crime. All states treat compensation as the payer of last resort, so that all other means of meeting crime-related expenses must be exhausted for compensation to be awarded. The states also impose claim filing and law enforcement reporting (to document that a crime occurred and to encourage cooperation with the justice system) requirements, but the specifics of these requirements vary from state to state. States also vary on the types of losses that are eligible for compensation, with some states going far beyond federal provisions to cover a wide variety of crime-related expenses (such as moving expenses, replacement services, travel expenses, rehabilitation services, attorney fees, some property expenses, and pain and suffering in three states).

Compensation funds are used mostly to pay the types of expenses provided under federal guidelines. In 2001, nearly half (47 percent) of compensation awards, averaging across states, were for medical/dental expenses. Economic support (lost wages and loss of support) accounted for 20 percent of payments, and funeral/burial expenses averaged 13 percent. Mental health expenses averaged nine percent of payments. One-third of the states use compensation funds to pay for sexual assault forensic exams. Only eight percent of payments, on average, are for “other” types of expenses allowed by state regulations. These are cross-state averages; the exact amounts do of course vary a great deal from state to state.

Compensation serves victims of a broad range of crimes, with a heavy emphasis on violent crimes. The states average 55 percent of awards for assaults, including both domestic and non-domestic assaults.¹ Homicide accounts for 18 percent of awards across the states, on average.

¹ Statistics on the numbers of claim paid indicate that 18 percent of claims are for domestic violence-related crime.

Five percent of compensation funds are spent on sexual assault claims, averaging across states, and another eight percent are spent on child abuse. Drunk driving claims account for an average of four percent of state payments; robbery accounts for two percent; and other crime types receive eight percent of payments. Again, the exact distribution of funds across crime types varies a good deal from state to state.

All but two states impose a cap on the amount that can be paid to claimants, and many states have caps on categories of expenses within the overall amount (such as medical, lost wages, and so on). The overall caps vary widely but average around \$35,000 (the extremes are \$5,000 and \$180,000). Only catastrophic injury claims come near the maximums; the average claim is about \$2,800 per claim across states. In 2001, the states and territories paid a total of \$367.5 million in over 147,000 claims.

Program Standards and Goals

In 1996 the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards (NACVCB) developed standards for program operations in four key areas. These include:

- Outreach, training, and communication to recruit eligible claims from a broad range of victims, and to work effectively with victims and advocates in the claims process.
- Expedition and accurate claims processing, so that eligible victims may receive funds promptly and in accordance with compensation regulations.
- Good decision-making on claims, to ensure that the mission of serving crime victims is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- Sound financial planning to promote long-term financial stability while paying claims as fully as regulations allow.

OVC sponsored a broad-based and wide-ranging examination of the victim service field, including victim compensation, which produced the landmark *New Directions From the Field: Victims' Rights and Services for the 21st Century* (OVC, 1998). In this work OVC made similar recommendations for program management, and additional recommendations to improve coordination with victim assistance programs, and to expand benefits and reduce requirements.

These earlier efforts helped to provide a framework from which we approached our task of describing and evaluating how well policies and operations function to serve victims, and to offer recommendations for future developments. The following sections integrate the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from the various research activities we implemented – the national survey of all state compensation administrators in 1999; two rounds of site visits for in-depth analyses of compensation in six states through interviews with program administrators and staff, members of oversight bodies, advocacy groups, and direct service providers; focus groups with clients of VOCA assistance programs, in which compensation issues were discussed; and a survey of over 450 compensation claimants to get the clients' perspectives. The presentation is organized around major themes of program policies and operations.

The Mission of Compensation Programs

Compensation programs have a dual mission: to meet victims' financial needs as fully as possible, while also complying with regulations limiting payments to certain conditions and guarding against misuse of public funds through fraud or abuse. Our administrator survey and site visit interviews indicated that many programs are adopting a client-service orientation, emphasizing the goal of meeting victims' needs more completely by identifying obstacles and developing innovative solutions. Program requirements, such as law enforcement reporting or claim filing deadlines, are being relaxed to allow more victims to be served more completely. Some states will allow reports to other agencies, in order to verify that the crime occurred while still serving victims who are reluctant to report to law enforcement. Claim filing deadlines can be waived under certain circumstances that may delay victims' ability to file for compensation, such as long period of secrecy often surrounding chronic crimes occurring during childhood. Cumbersome case processing procedures, such as verification requirements, are being streamlined to serve victims better. For example, some states are being more proactive in their attempts to obtain verifications necessary to comply with program regulations, and have consequently seen an increase in the number of claims approved for payment and a decrease in the time it takes to process those claims. Some states are raising overall or categorical payment caps to better meet victims' needs. One area in which cap increases may be particularly needed is funeral/burial costs, since these expenses may come closest to program caps.

These efforts are paying off in high levels of client satisfaction. Our survey of claimants found that they were generally satisfied with the process and outcome of their experiences of compensation programs; the average score on a satisfaction scale ranging from 12 to 24 was 21.8. Claimants with the most positive perceptions of the compensation experience were those whose claims were processed more quickly, and with more claimed expenses paid. White female claimants were also more satisfied than male or minority claimants, even accounting for the effects of other factors associated with the claim. This finding seems worthy of further examination.

Financial Planning

Since 1997 OVC has allowed a four-year obligation period, so that compensation administrators have the year of award plus the following three years to spend federal funds. Our 1999 survey found that many state administrators make use of this flexibility, and are able to expend the funds during this period. This provision is likely to become even more useful in the immediate future, when FY 2003 allocations from OVC rise sharply from FY 2002 allocations, because of the recent change in the payout formula. However, some states which had been in sound financial health in the late 1990's are now finding themselves facing challenges to their fiscal stability. In more recent years many states have developed severe budget crises, which may make compensation funds potentially open to "raids" by state legislatures to fund other types of programs. In addition, crime rates seem to be rising again after a ten-year decrease, healthcare costs are increasing rapidly, and public and private insurance coverage is less likely to

meet costs (NACVCB, 2002). It will be critical for compensation programs to protect their allocations and continue to grow the programs, so that they can continue to fulfill their mission of meeting crime victims' financial needs.

Program Management

While the goal of compensation is to provide payments for crime-related expenses, some funds must be used to run the programs if they are to be well-run. OVC guidelines allow state administrators to use up to five percent of their federal allocation for administrative activities, and support for these activities may be available from state funds as well. Our 1999 survey found that about half the administrators used this allowance to its fullest extent, but the other half did not make use of it or made very little use. Site visit interviews shed some light on this finding: those who did not use the federal allowance may have had support from other sources, they may have felt that diverting funds from direct payments would be a political misstep, or they may have felt that all funds were desperately needed for payments.

The administrators' survey and site visit interviews indicated that administrative activities generally focus on "basic" activities such as staffing, training, and office equipment. More "advanced" administrative activities, such as strategic planning, needs assessments, coordination, and the development of operational manuals and technology, are less widely in use (although there are of course exceptions). Those states that did undertake these activities found them to be very useful.

More administrative activities and more advanced administrative activities could benefit compensation programs and the victims they serve. While the overall federal allocation for 2003 will increase by about 50 percent, the proportion of funds that can be used for administrative activities will remain stable at five percent. The actual amount of funds available for administration will increase when the overall allocation increases, but the percentage remains stable at five percent rather than increasing proportionately to 7.5 percent. This means that states will have more funds to manage with only the same proportion of administrative funds. Some states do use the administrative allowance and find it useful but insufficient; these states may find it even more difficult to improve program operations when they have more funds to award without a proportionate increase in support for program management.

Outreach and Communication

Since victims' compensation is not a household name like workers' compensation is, it is critical for victims and those who work directly with them – law enforcement, prosecutors, advocates, health care providers, counselors, and so on – to be familiar with the compensation program and how it works. The more familiar they are with compensation, the more likely it is that a larger number of qualified claims will be submitted and benefits paid. Most compensation programs reported providing training to service providers, especially victim advocates and

criminal justice personnel. One state, for example, has recently developed a special training unit that offers a number of training opportunities and resources to a wide range of providers. It is important to familiarize new providers with compensation, and it is also important to keep providers abreast of changes in policies and procedures. We visited one state in which a number of policy changes had recently been made to improve client service. However, the providers in that state that we spoke with were not familiar with the changes, so the information they provided to victims was not up-to-date, and victims may not have been as well-served by compensation as they would if their providers were operating on more current information.

Compensation programs may also interact directly with victims. Many programs have toll-free statewide numbers for victims to call, and some have hired staff to serve as victim liaisons. These staff may not only assist victims with the compensation process, but may also provide useful information and referrals to help victims meet other needs. One state reported an innovative approach to working directly with victims, through personal meetings to explain the program's decision and allow opportunity for input when claims are denied for contributory misconduct.

The claimants we surveyed generally reported learning about compensation in a timely manner, but since we only talked to those who did apply for compensation, it is certainly possible that a number of potentially eligible claimants never learned of compensation or learned of it too late to apply. The most common referral sources were victim service programs, the police, and prosecutors, and some victims never access any of these agencies so may not be likely to learn of compensation without direct outreach from compensation programs, or referrals from other providers with whom they do have contact.

The majority of compensation administrators indicated that a number of groups of victims may be underserved, including members of demographic categories and victims of certain types of crimes. Comparisons of characteristics of our survey sample with victimization statistics indicated that victims of assault, younger victims, male victims, and minority victims might be less likely to access compensation than would be expected. It is possible that eligibility criteria may account for these patterns, and these criteria may or may not be amenable to changes designed to reach more of these victims. It is also possible that outreach to these groups could be improved to increase their representation among claims.

Claims Processing

Once a victim learns of compensation, there is a process that must be activated to file for benefits. All states require an application form and the verifications needed to ensure compliance with program regulations. They must document that an eligible type of crime occurred, that the victim's misconduct did not contribute to the crime, that eligible types of expenses were incurred, that there were no other sources of payments for these expenses, and so on. Victims, and advocates assisting them with the claim, may have to provide police reports,

bills for services, insurance statements, employment verifications, death certificates, marriage licenses, children's birth certificates, and other relevant documents. This can be a burdensome process for people traumatized by violent crime and pressured by mounting debts.

State laws or constitutional amendments often require law enforcement or prosecution staff to assist victims with compensation claims, and VOCA-funded assistance providers are mandated to help victims with compensation. About half the claimants in our survey sample received services, often a broad range of different types of help, usually from victim service providers. Despite the fact that half the claimants did not receive assistance with the claim, few claimants reported needing assistance they did not receive. However, with claim approval rates near 90 percent in our survey sample, two-thirds of surveyed claimants still reported a median of \$600 in unrecovered losses. Since many of these losses were for types of expenses covered by compensation, but for which they did not file claims, the claimants may have needed more assistance than they realized.

Claim processing time averaged ten weeks for our survey sample, which is well within recommended timeframes for efficient program operations. Three-quarters of the claimants in our survey indicated that their claim was processed within a reasonable amount of time, and since case processing time was a key determinant of overall satisfaction, this is a strong endorsement of program operations. Streamlined verification procedures are likely to be responsible for shorter processing times, since the verification segment of case processing was reported as the most time-consuming in our survey of state administrators.

Claim Outcomes

Claims can be approved in whole or in part, or denied on any of a number of grounds. In general approval rates are high; they were 87 percent in our survey sample. However, when claims are denied there may be barriers to effectively conveying information to claimants about reasons for denials and appeals options. Our survey found that only half the claimants with full or partial denials reported being given reasons for denials, and 16 percent reported receiving information on the appeals process.

One reason that claims may be denied is contributory misconduct issues. While this is not the most common reason for denials, it is one of the trickiest, since it may require judgments on a case-by-case basis. Our administrator survey found that states' approach to this issue varies considerably, with some states requiring causal connection between the victim's illegal behavior and the crime to justify denials, while other states would deny claims when the victim was engaging in illegal behavior even if it was not causally connected to the crime. Three-quarters of the states have written policies to guide these difficult decisions.

Recommendations for Compensation Program Development

Our research findings indicate that compensation programs are generally functioning in accordance with identified goals and standards. They seem to be performing the most essential activities to promote effective program management and financial planning; outreach and communication; claims processing; and decision-making. Programs place a high priority on serving victims as the underlying mission, and are taking proactive steps to provide high-quality client services in a number of areas. Useful directions for future developments may include:

- *Service expansion.* Many states will have significantly more funding available in FY 2003 and the coming years because of the increase in the federal payout formula. These funds are likely to be badly needed because of rising crime and decreasing insurance coverage to meet increasing health care costs. As long as the funds remain dedicated to victim compensation, programs may be able to continue the trend of increasing caps, expanding benefits, and reducing eligibility criteria to serve victims more completely.
- *Program management.* Advanced administrative activities are very helpful to those programs that have undertaken them. While funding for these activities is likely to continue to be in short supply, those programs that can access such support are likely to benefit from needs assessments, strategic planning, coordination, automation, and related activities. Technical assistance from OVC and others with expertise in these areas may be needed to help administrators explore these new areas in productive ways.
- *Outreach.* Compensation programs provide training and resources to service providers who work directly with victims, in order to cultivate eligible claims and enhance claim processing. Outreach to victim service providers and criminal justice personnel should continue, to orient new staff and to keep existing staff current on policy and program changes. Outreach should also emphasize a broader range of service providers to reach broader groups of victims who may have been historically underserved, including groups who work with racial, ethnic, language, or cultural minorities. Direct communications with victims can also be enhanced by having victim liaisons on compensation program staff, and by innovative approaches to interacting with victims in a sensitive fashion on delicate issues, such as contributory misconduct denials.
- *Claims processing.* Many programs have made great strides to reduce burdens inherent in the application process, such as more proactive verification procedures to increase approval rates and decrease case processing time. Case processing is likely to see further improvements as advocates and other service providers are better trained in compensation policies and procedures, and can provide better assistance to victims.
- *Claims decision-making.* While approval rates are high, special efforts may be needed when claims are denied to help claimants understand why their claims were denied and what their options are. Again, better-informed service providers may be able to assist victims whose claims were denied, so that they can take additional steps if appropriate.

VOCA VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Victims of crime may need crisis intervention, emotional support, system advocacy, and help with emergency and longer-term needs for safety and shelter. These needs may be met by family, friends, and other social supports; by privately-funded providers such as counselors in private practice; or they may be met by formal victim assistance programs. Victim assistance programs are based in law enforcement agencies, prosecutor's offices, or private non-profit organizations such as child abuse programs, rape crisis centers, domestic violence programs, MADD programs, programs for homicide survivors, programs for victims of hate crimes, programs for elderly or disabled victims, and so on. These programs are supported from various federal funding streams, from state funds, and from private sources such as United Way and other charitable foundations. Our study examined VOCA-funded victim assistance programs to assess how VOCA funds are managed by state administrators and how they are put to use at the community level. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the five territories receive VOCA assistance funding from OVC, as part of the formula grant distributions from the CVF. About 40 percent of the approximately 10,000 local assistance providers receive support from VOCA, along with many other sources in most cases.

OVC allocates these funds to state administrators, who may be housed in a variety of different types of state agencies, for distribution to community-level direct service providers. OVC issues guidelines governing the administration of funds at the state level and the use of funds by community subgrantees. As specified in 1997 guidelines, state programs must award at least ten percent of funds for domestic violence victims, ten percent for sexual assault victims, ten percent for child abuse victims, and ten percent for underserved populations, with the remainder at the administrators' discretion. State programs have four years to obligate federal allocations, and may use up to five percent for administrative activities and one percent for training activities (with the rest to be distributed to community-level agencies). OVC guidelines specify that VOCA funds awarded to community-level service providers can support public non-federal and private non-profit organizations that provide a 20 percent match and do not charge victims for services. VOCA funds can only be used to support direct services (although this requirement may be relaxed with new guidelines currently under consideration), and providers must assist clients with compensation.

From 1986 to 2002, OVC distributed \$2.7 billion to state VOCA assistance programs. Annual allocations increased at a fairly steady level until 1995, but then increased steeply during 1996 and 1997, dropped significantly in 1998 and 1999, and increased again in 2000. The fluctuations which marked the years from 1996 to 1999 were caused by fluctuations in collections into the CVF and allocation formulas that provide all formula funds not needed to meet the compensation payout to the assistance programs. In response to these fluctuations, Congress began capping allocations in FY 2000, with remaining funds to be held in the CVF for allocation in future years. Since then allocations have stabilized, showing relatively modest increases from 2000 to 2001 and from 2001 to 2002. However, expected allocations for 2003 are expected to be seven percent less than 2002 allocations, because of the increase in the

compensation payout formula and earmarks and set-asides for other uses, despite an excess of about \$638 million in unallocated collections (after expected 2003 allocations).

The Use of VOCA Assistance Funds

In 2002 the states received an average of \$6.8 million each, with a midpoint of \$4.8 million. Allocations are based on population so state-by-state figures vary considerably; the largest allocation was California's \$42.7 million. In 2001 over 5,400 awards were made with VOCA assistance funds, and over 3.5 million victims were served by VOCA-funded programs.

Use of the funds to serve victims of different types of crimes varies widely across states, but averages from 2001 data illustrate general patterns. Domestic violence victims are by far the most frequent recipient of VOCA-funded services. Across states, an average of just over half of all victims served were victims of domestic violence. Victims of adult sexual assault averaged about five percent of all victims served, and child abuse victims averaged about 15 percent. Assault victims represented five percent of victims, and homicide survivors were three percent. Drunk driving victims accounted for one percent of victims served, and robbery was two percent. Victims of other types of crime, such as elder abuse, adults molested as children, and other crimes, averaged 17 percent of all victims served across states.

Statistics from 2001 are also available to describe services provided. From half to 69 percent of victims received telephone information and referrals; in-person information and referrals; criminal justice system advocacy and support; and follow-up contacts. From 20 to 41 percent of victims received crisis counseling; other types of services; personal advocacy; and assistance in filing compensation claims. Fewer than 15 percent of victims received group treatment and support; shelter and safehouse; emergency legal advocacy; therapy; and emergency financial assistance.

Policy and Program Issues

In 1997 OVC held regional meetings of state VOCA assistance administrators to discuss critical issues in program administration and share innovative funding strategies and programs. These meetings were spurred by the enormous increase in allocations that year, and by new OVC guidelines allowing the four-year obligation period. The issues identified as critical included funding fluctuations and long-range planning; needs and service assessments; use of administrative funds; outreach to underserved victims; outreach to providers; coordination of federal funding streams and reporting requirements; use of advisory boards; implementing victims' rights legislation; training efforts; statewide toll-free numbers for victims; and use of technology. OVC's *New Directions* (1998) expanded on these issues with recommendations to develop services for special situations (such as mass crisis events) and special victims (such as the disabled). Other recommendations include assisting victims in interacting with the media,

public awareness activities, development of program standards, staff training and certification, and program evaluation.

These earlier efforts helped to provided a framework from which we approached our task of describing and evaluating how well state grant administration and local service providers function to serve victims, and to offer recommendations for future developments. The following sections integrate the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from the various research activities we implemented – the national survey of all state VOCA assistance administrators in 1999; two rounds of site visits for in-depth analyses of assistance in six states through interviews with program administrators and staff, members of oversight bodies, advocacy groups, and direct service providers; focus groups with clients of VOCA assistance programs; and a survey of nearly 600 VOCA-funded program clients to get their perspectives. The presentation is organized around major themes of program policies and operations.

Funding Supports Valuable Services

Congressional caps on CVF allocations from 2000 to 2002 prevented the wide fluctuations seen in the previous four years and provided relatively moderate increases from year to year. However, expected allocations for 2003 will produce a seven percent decrease in VOCA funds available to assistance programs, the first drop since 1999. Many in the victim field find a cutback in funding to be unpalatable, given the approximately \$638 million in collected but unallocated funds in the CVF. With the uncertainty of the annual Congressional appropriations process, and wide variations in CVF collections from year to year (with a possible decrease in collections in the current year), state administrators are challenged to do long-range planning in this climate of instability. The four-year obligation period helps to relieve pressures on state administrators, but a greater measure of predictability would be very useful for long-range planning. Mechanisms for smoothing allocation fluctuations and reducing uncertainty as much as possible are needed.

It is critical that policies be developed for putting funds to work for victims in a timely way and in accordance with the legislative intent of VOCA. According to the clients we spoke with, VOCA funds services that meet many of their needs and are very valuable. Our survey of VOCA-funded program clients, drawing on a broad base of program types and victim characteristics, found that VOCA funds are supporting services that meet many victims' needs and are highly regarded by clients. The survey found that victims had an average of four different types of needs, and that, while many victims get help from other sources as well, the VOCA-funded program addressed 60 percent of their needs. Victims' satisfaction with services was assessed through a scale with possible scores ranging from eight to 24; the average score was 22. This indicates that many victims were very satisfied with the VOCA-funded services they received.

However, there are still gaps that could be addressed if additional funding were available. Fifteen percent of the victims in our survey had service needs that were not met by any source, including the VOCA-funded program, other formal services, and informal help sources. These needs were most often service needs assessments and referrals, assistance with the criminal justice system, and assistance with finances or creditors. Members of racial/ethnic minorities were more likely to have unmet needs. It may be useful to expand services to these victims and expand services related to needs assessments, referrals, the justice system, and financial matters, to meet victims' needs more completely. In addition, many state administrators and direct service providers felt there are large groups of victims who do not access services at all, and more efforts should be concentrated on reaching these victims. These may include members of racial/ethnic minorities as well as victims of certain types of crimes, disabled victims, rural victims, and gay/lesbian victims.

State Program Management

According to our 1999 survey, assistance administrators tend to make fairly full use of the five percent administrative allowance, with two-thirds of state programs reporting at least some use and the others reporting full use. These funds have supported staffing, training, subgrantee monitoring, and the purchase of office equipment, which may be described as "basic" administrative activities. More "advanced" activities, such as strategic planning, improved coordination, and automation, were less commonly reported. Many administrators expressed the need for greater support for administrative activities.

This survey of state administrators also found that only half had a formal strategic plan to identify priorities and future developments in subgrant funding. Continuation awards are the norm. While it was the original intent of VOCA legislation to provide core funding to stabilize services, and this is very important, it may be difficult to expand into new areas when funds are committed to current subgrantees to continue ongoing work. Administrators may also be reluctant to undertake new projects given the uncertainties of future funding availability. Since there is a considerable emphasis on continuation funding of current subgrantees, it is not surprising that state administrators' outreach to potential subgrantees to publicize funding availability tended to emphasize current subgrantees (although there were exceptions, with some site visit states describing proactive efforts to recruit and assist new applicants).

Needs assessments can be useful to identify gaps in services and plan priorities. We found that most states use a specific process for identifying needs, usually informal processes such as consulting with those working in the field. Formal systematic methods are not without drawbacks, but can be more inclusive than methods that rely on people already working in the area. We found in site visits that needs assessments may be conducted at the local level by community-based groups, or in a more centralized fashion through a state-wide process.

States use various methods for making subgrant award decisions, and each procedure has its advantages and drawbacks. Some states concentrate the decision-making power in the administrative agency, others use a state-level multidisciplinary board, and others use a decentralized system with decision-making power effectively evolved to local-level bodies across the state. Each is subject to at least perceived political pressures. Service providers that belong to a strong network, such as domestic violence coalitions, are often thought to have the advantage in obtaining funding because of the strength and the connections of the coalition. There is no single model that works best in all circumstances, and any method of distributing funding will be subject to criticism because of the sensitive nature of this function.

As with needs assessment procedures, monitoring processes are largely informal and constrained to review of progress reports (unless problems are noted, then more active monitoring such as site visits may occur). Monitoring is very important to ensure that funds are put to best use, particularly in an atmosphere of largely continuation funding. Some states are stepping up monitoring procedures and many providers welcome these efforts. However, few proactive efforts by state administrators to monitor and enforce providers' compliance with requirements to assist victims with compensation were observed. As monitoring efforts are enhanced, this would be an important area to include.

One percent of the VOCA allocation can be used for training, with a 20 percent match (these restrictions may be expanded under pending new guidelines). Many state administrators access these funds to provide training to subgrantees, but some have not made use of them because state and other federal (such as STOP VAWA) funds are explicitly targeted for training activities. This suggests that the use of VOCA funds for training could be directed toward service providers who would not be eligible for training supported by other funds. For example, STOP VAWA funds focus on violence against women, so training of providers who serve victims other than domestic violence and sexual assault might be a priority for VOCA training funds.

An important resource for state administrators is their new professional association, the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators. The Association can be a very useful vehicle for exchanging information among administrators on these critical activities, so that states can learn from each other's experiences and innovative ideas. While this association is too new to have been included as a focus of the evaluation, it seems to have the support of administrators and good resources to accomplish useful program development goals.

Issues for Direct Service Providers

Our site visit interviews with VOCA-funded providers focused on several important issues in service provision. Some of these issues revolve around program administrative activities – outreach, coordination, and reporting requirements – rather than direct service, so cannot be supported with VOCA funds under current OVC guidelines. Some providers have difficulty

finding support for administrative activities, and would like to have an administrative allowance from their VOCA subgrants.

Many VOCA-funded program clients also turned to a variety of other sources to meet their crime-related needs, including a range of formal help sources (such as other victim service providers, other types of social service or healthcare providers, and criminal justice personnel) and informal sources (such as family and friends). Clearly, VOCA-funded victim service providers need to coordinate, and often do coordinate, with other providers in the community, to avoid gaps or duplication of services to shared clients. This coordination should reach across traditional boundaries of “victim service providers” and include those working in other fields as well, such as healthcare. Coordination activities can take various forms, such as cross-training, developing coordinated policies or procedures, developing referral procedures and resources (such as palm cards), or multidisciplinary task forces. Issues arising from conflicting missions and victim confidentiality are likely to arise and must be resolved for coordination efforts to move forward.

There is consensus that many types of victims (defined by both type of crime and victim characteristics) are underserved. Our survey found that, even among clients who had accessed VOCA-funded service programs, members of racial/ethnic minorities were more likely to have unmet needs. Our discussions with professionals in the field identified a number of underserved victim groups, along racial/ethnic lines as well as by type of crime and victim demographics and other characteristics, such as sexual orientation, disability, and residence in a rural area. Efforts to meet these needs may involve expanding current victim service programs, including developing new programs as well as new staffing patterns or training to respond appropriately to new victim populations. Another approach is to develop victim service programs within other types of organizations that currently work with underserved populations.

Staff often work under stressful conditions for low pay. The use of volunteers is problematic for some programs, because of the nature of the services provided, limits on volunteers’ availability, and privacy/confidentiality concerns. Efforts to improve the pay scale, reduce disparities between various segments of the workforce, and recognize special contributions are helpful in improving quality of life and reducing staff burnout and turnover. It would also be helpful to some programs if the requirement for using volunteers was relaxed to respond to particular concerns with the use of volunteers.

Coordination of reporting requirements across various funding sources (including the many federal funding streams) would help reduce programs’ record-keeping requirements. Currently, each of many funding sources may have its own reporting requirements, and this requires programs to spend a good deal of time keeping the same data in many different ways. A multi-agency federal task force has explored ways to coordinate reporting requirements, but a unified form has not yet been made available.

Survey participants were less satisfied with their experiences with the criminal justice system than they were with VOCA-funded program services, although their levels of satisfaction were still fairly high on the whole. Efforts by victim service programs to strengthen the justice system's response to offenders, primarily in the form of more severe punishment, would fulfill a major unmet service need of many victims and address the primary source of victims' dissatisfaction with the justice system. These efforts may take the form of system advocacy, in which advocates work to strengthen sentencing laws across the board. Or they may do case advocacy by working with prosecutors to represent the victim's experiences and input in an effective way that the court will heed (such as victim impact statements). Victims who were served by public-based programs were more satisfied with the justice system experience than were victims served by nonprofits. This may indicate that public-based advocates are well-placed to assist victims in their needs related to the criminal case. Some victims also reported problems with how justice personnel handled the case, including failure to protect victims, cultural misunderstandings, system inefficiencies, and failure to respond to victims' rights, needs, or input.

Victims' rights are codified in legislation and state constitutional amendments, but implementation is often less than perfect. More training and resources to assist justice agency personnel in their efforts to provide victims' rights as specified by law are necessary, as are corrective mechanisms for cases in which victims are not provided their rights.

Recommendations for VOCA Assistance Program Development

State administrators and community-level subgrantees who provide direct services are clearly functioning well in a number of areas. This is commendable particularly in light of the difficult funding situation. Useful directions for future developments may include:

- *Make funds available for victim services.* VOCA funds support services that address many of victims' needs and are highly valued by clients. Given the service gaps that exist – many victims do not access services, and even some of those who do still have needs that are not met by any source – it seems crucial to make funds available to support and expand these services. There is over \$600 million in collected but unallocated funds currently dedicated by law to victim service uses.
- *Balance the need to provide funding with the need to provide stability.* One approach to making funds available would be to disburse all collections from the CVF in lump sum allocations to states. However, given the instability of collections into the CVF from year to year, this would be unlikely to be a prudent long-term strategy. Instead, it may be a wiser course to develop provisions for drawing on the unallocated collections in years in which CVF collections are down, and replenishing these “cushion” funds when collections are high. Such a plan was included as part of the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001, but was deleted from FY 2002 Justice Department appropriations legislation. Since other allocations are made

from the CVF and changes to these allocations (such as increases in the compensation payout formula and changes to earmarks and set-asides) can affect amounts available for VOCA assistance programs, the more directly such a plan addresses assistance allocations specifically, the more stability it will provide to these funds. It would also be very helpful to develop additional methods of funding victim assistance programs that do not rely on CVF collections, to increase support and provide more stability.

- *Support state administrators' activities to enhance fund management.* We found that programs are generally well-run but that administrators could, and would like to, do much more if more support for these activities was available. More systematic needs assessments, development of strategic planning, enhanced coordination with other fund administrators, expanded training, more active monitoring of subgrantees, and development of automated systems could greatly enhance grant management and the delivery of services to victims. Since many states can and do make use of the federal administrative and training allowances, increases in these allowance could provide very valuable support. This may work best when overall allocations increase, so that reserving more funds for administrative and training activities would not contribute to a decrease in funds available for subgrant awards. State administrators have recently formed a professional association, the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators. This may be a very useful vehicle for exchanging information among state agencies so that states can learn from each other's experiences and innovative ideas.
- *Support service providers' administrative activities.* Pending guidelines that would allow subgrantees to use some of their VOCA awards to support essential administrative activities such as coordination and outreach would be very welcome to many providers. Our survey found that many clients of VOCA-funded programs work with other providers as well, so it is critical to coordinate services. We also found in the survey and site visits that many groups are unserved or underserved; outreach is essential for reaching these groups of victims. In some cases the development of new services or specialized training to meet specific needs of newly-served victims may be important. Our survey found that VOCA program clients are more frequently referred to the VOCA program by some agencies (such as law enforcement) than by others (such as prosecutors' offices or healthcare providers). This may provide useful directions for where to target outreach and training efforts in the future, to reach new groups of victims.
- *Address operational challenges to direct service programs.* Staff burnout, due to demanding work conditions and low pay, is problematic for many programs (especially nonprofit programs, where pay scales may be lower than public-based programs). Some programs are able to use volunteers with great success, whereas others are reluctant to make extensive use of this resource because of the nature of the work, limits on volunteers' availability, and privacy and confidentiality

concerns (particularly in rural or tribal areas). Another challenge is posed by unique reporting requirements imposed by many funders, which requires a great deal of record-keeping. These challenges could be addressed by enhancing staffing resources and pay scales, relaxing requirements around the use of volunteers where warranted, and promoting efforts to coordinate reporting requirements, at least across federal funders of victim services.

- *Develop direct services to fill unmet needs.* Our client surveys and interviews suggested several areas in which services should be expanded. Services for underserved groups of victims, such as racial/ethnic minorities and others, should be developed in culturally appropriate ways and efforts should be made to reach these victims and offer them services. Advocates should continue to focus on improving the justice system's responsiveness to victim concerns, including implementation and enforcement of victim rights, providing victims' input on appropriate criminal case outcomes, and improving the treatment of victims by the justice system. Finally, needs assessments, service referrals, and financial counseling should be enhanced to better meet victims' needs.

COORDINATION OF VICTIM ASSISTANCE AND COMPENSATION PROGRAMS

Sources of Help for Victims

While not all victims have recourse to the assistance needed to recover from criminal victimization, there is a wide range of resources available to at least some victims. Victims' financial needs may be met by private insurance, including life insurance, health insurance, or automobile insurance that can pay the financial costs resulting from crime. Some also have employment-related benefits such as paid leave or employee assistance programs. Other victims may be able to access public benefits such as workers' compensation, unemployment compensation, and housing and food subsidies. Some victims may receive restitution from the offender or civil awards, although these occur relatively rarely. Victims with no other resources for paying crime-related expenses can turn to the payer of last resort, state crime victim compensation programs.

Victims' needs for physical recovery and future safety, and for emotional and psychological healing, may also be met by various sources. Many victims turn to informal resources such as family and friends, or social supports such as faith-based institutions and community support groups. Victims may also access formal sources of assistance. The justice system can help address victims' needs for justice by investigating and prosecuting offenders, or in some cases through restorative justice programs such as victim-offender reconciliation. Private health and mental health care providers assist victims with physical and psychological/emotional recovery. Agencies that explicitly provide services to victims, such as rape crisis centers, domestic violence programs, child abuse programs, MADD organizations, law enforcement- and

prosecution-based victim/witness staff, programs for survivors of homicide, and others clearly serve many crime victims. These programs may be supported in part with VOCA funds and/or other federal funding streams (such as VAWA, Byrne, Preventive Health and Health Services, and Family Violence Prevention and Services Act funds), as well as state funding for victim services, and private funding such as United Way agencies.

The Need for Coordination

Ideally, all sources of help for victims would work together collaboratively to provide comprehensive, effective services in an efficient, integrated system. This ideal has yet to be achieved. As part of this study's focus on VOCA assistance and compensation programs, we examined how these programs work together and how coordination could be improved. Clearly, VOCA-funded assistance and compensation programs cannot be expected to provide all services needed by all victims. However, these programs can coordinate to effectively leverage their resources to *help* provide a seamless web of support for victims' recovery from the many adverse consequences of victimization.

According to both OVC and the NACVCB, coordination should move beyond communication and toward active collaboration. In *New Directions*, OVC (1998) recommends coordination to improve outreach and public awareness about compensation, to improve the compensation program's understanding of victims' needs, and to increase the range of services available to victims. The programs themselves have developed recommended strategies for improved coordination (NACVCB, 1998). These include strategies to assist claimants, such as training VOCA assistance subgrantees about compensation requirements, placing a VOCA-funded victim advocate in the compensation office to assist claimants, and sending brochures and application forms to all VOCA assistance subgrantees based on a list provided to the compensation office by the VOCA assistance administrator. Recommended coordination strategies for policy development include asking compensation directors to participate in the VOCA assistance grant review process, inviting VOCA assistance administrators and subgrantees to review compensation statutes and policies, and working together to identify underserved populations and develop outreach plans.

Methods of Coordination Between VOCA Assistance and Compensation Programs

The various research methods we employed showed that coordination can occur at two levels of operation: at the case level and at a more systemic level.

Case level coordination

Compensation and VOCA assistance programs can work together on specific cases to improve services for victims. VOCA-funded assistance programs are required to inform and assist victims with compensation applications. Well-informed providers can perform valuable pre-screening activities (assessing who may need compensation and be eligible for it); provide assistance to eligible claimants with the application process and documentation requirements; and serve as a liaison between the victim and the compensation program, explaining the program

to the client and representing the victim's needs and experiences to the program. These forms of assistance can both benefit the victim and improve the efficiency of compensation program operations.

We found in our survey of compensation claimants that one-third were informed about compensation by victim advocates, although it was not possible to tell whether these claimants had contacted victim service programs, or whether the advocates worked for VOCA-funded programs (given that VOCA helps support about 40 percent of service providers, it seems likely that many did). Half of the claimants received help with the compensation application; of those, the most frequent provider of assistance (for 41 percent of the claimants who got help) was a victim advocate. Similarly, our survey of VOCA-funded assistance program clients found that while under half (45 percent) were aware of compensation, of those who were aware the most frequent source of information was the VOCA-funded program (54 percent), and the most common source for assistance with the compensation application, for those who got such help, was the VOCA-funded program (73 percent). Our focus groups with VOCA assistance program clients indicated that many of these victims were unaware or misinformed about compensation, although some had applied and received benefits.

Our interviews during site visits indicated that many victim service providers may not assist clients with compensation. Some, although certainly not all, private non-profit providers typically refer clients to prosecution-based providers, viewing compensation assistance as a victim rights service for which prosecution-based providers are responsible. Other direct service providers from various sectors may not help victims with compensation because they are not well-informed about the program and its procedures, or because they have had difficult experiences working with compensation in the past and do not view it as beneficial to victims. Some providers may retain this view even after compensation programs have altered their policies or practices to make them more responsive to victims' and advocates' concerns.

However, many direct service providers clearly do assist victims with information about compensation and help with the application process. While we did not find specific protocols for compensation-related assistance, many programs had clearly evolved working procedures. Some programs kept brochures and application forms in their offices, and helped clients with securing verifications as well as filling out the application form. Some programs stayed involved in the compensation process past the initial filing of the application, for at least some clients, and were able to provide follow-up assistance and explanations as needed.

Case-level coordination is a two-way street. Compensation program staff can assist claimants in identifying their needs for other types of services and locating providers. These providers may also be able to help claimants or potential claimants through difficulties they may encounter with the compensation process. Many claimants may not have contacted victim assistance programs, and it seems likely that many of these claimants may be able to benefit from the services provided by VOCA programs.

There are several ways in which compensation programs can help victims with their needs for the types of services provided by VOCA assistance programs. Some programs are employing victim liaisons or advocates on staff, whose express function is to assist victims with their compensation-related questions, and to identify and make referrals to services for victims' other needs. These positions may be supported with VOCA assistance subgrants to the compensation program. In our telephone survey of compensation administrators in 1999, 42 percent reported that their program has a victim liaison/advocate on staff, although few had applied for VOCA assistance funding to support this position. While some of these staff may serve multiple functions, we found in our site visits in more recent years that at least some programs are employing staff who are dedicated victim liaisons/advocates.

Compensation programs without designated victim liaisons/advocates can also assist victims with needs other than compensation by having generalist staff provide needs assessment and referral services to claimants they speak with. Slightly over half (54 percent) of our claimant survey participants reported that they had spoken with someone at the compensation program; one-third of those said that the person they spoke with asked if they needed referrals to other services. We did not ask exactly who the claimant had spoken with, since they would be unlikely to know whether the individual was a designated victim liaison/advocate, but it seems likely that the staff member was often the claims processor (some of these programs did not have victim liaisons/advocates on staff).

Compensation staff need information about victim service resources in order to provide effective referrals. Three-quarters of state compensation programs reported that they had a statewide directory of providers. The vast majority (85 percent) reported that compensation staff receive training in victimization issues, to help them interact more effectively with claimants.

Systemic coordination

Case-level coordination can be enhanced through coordination at the system level. Systemic coordination can also lead to more effective decision-making and more efficient operations by both compensation and assistance programs.

Compensation programs can help assistance providers meet their requirement to aid victims with compensation by offering introductory and ongoing training on the purposes, policies, and procedures of compensation. It is particularly important to keep assistance providers abreast of policy and procedural changes, so that providers can give clients current information. They can also keep service providers well-stocked with materials such as program brochures and application forms. Another very useful case-based link between compensation programs and assistance providers is one that allows providers to check the status of claims being processed and offer whatever help the claimant may need in forwarding the claim decision. Compensation and/or VOCA assistance administrators can also monitor claim referral sources, to assess the need for assistance to service providers to enhance their ability to refer clients.

Just over half (56 percent) of state compensation administrators reported training VOCA assistance providers, in our telephone survey. There may be a trend toward expanding this training, as several of our site visit states have been developing initiatives in recent years. One state, for example, has used administrative funds to develop a separate training unit; develop training materials and offer orientation and special topics training; make applications and other program materials available through the Internet; and develop an automated methods for victim service providers to file applications and follow-up to assess claim status.

Coordination between compensation and VOCA assistance administrators can also occur by providing input into each other's operational or decision-making processes. Some compensation administrators reported in our telephone survey that they ask VOCA assistance administrative agency staff to comment on their statutes, policies, forms, or procedures (27 percent). About one-quarter of assistance administrators reported in our telephone survey that staff from the state's compensation program sits on assistance grant review panels (25 percent) or assists in the planning process for distribution of assistance funds (21 percent). One of the site visit states specifically leverages compensation and VOCA assistance funds by not using assistance funds to support services that can be paid through compensation (such as mental health counseling). This policy maximizes resources by minimizing duplication of services and increasing the state's compensation allocation from OVC. However, since compensation has a number of eligibility criteria that do not apply to assistance services, channeling resources through compensation may limit access for some victims (e.g., those who choose not to report the crime to the police).

We found in our visits to six states that one important factor that may influence the success of coordination efforts is co-location of compensation and VOCA assistance administrators. Co-location is a matter of degree: compensation and assistance programs may be run by the same staff, by staff in closely aligned offices, by separate offices within the same governmental agency, or by entirely separate agencies of state government. Our observations indicated that the more closely aligned the program offices, the more likely coordination was to occur, and the more likely it was to exceed simple communication and reach actual collaboration. Closely aligned programs had significant logistical advantages in terms of shared office space, staff or managers, and formal and informal communications. However, even in states with very little co-location coordination was certainly possible and often successful, but it may require greater effort.

Coordination Between State Administrators of VOCA Assistance and Other Victim Services Funding

VOCA assistance grants are far from the only funding support for many direct service providers. There are several other federal funding streams; states provide their own funds; and many private funding sources are also used. State administrators of VOCA assistance funds and other federal and state funds may be able to leverage funds to the most advantage when they

make subgrant award decisions collaboratively. Coordination is necessary because the separate federal funding streams are often administered at the state level by separate state agencies. State funds for victim assistance may or may not be administered by a state agency that also administers one or more of the federal programs.

In our telephone survey of state VOCA assistance administrators, one-third reported that all federal and state funding sources were tracked at the state level (most often by the VOCA administrator), 45 percent reported that the federal sources were co-tracked, and 21 percent reported no co-tracking. In about three-quarters of the states, this information was used to identify service gaps and duplications, to make funding decisions, and to coordinate service programs. We learned through the site visits that true collaboration among funding administrators is complicated by the dispersion of administrative responsibilities across various state agencies, to different staff with different agency missions, policies, and procedures. Even when a single agency or office administers several funding sources, different decision-making processes may be used for each and different personnel may be involved in these decisions. Coordination can be increased by consolidating funding streams into a single agency (although some feared this concentration of power), or by coordination mechanisms such as shared advisory boards.

Recommendations to Improve Coordination Efforts

Based on our telephone surveys with program administrators, claimants, and clients, as well as our site visit interviews with a range of staff in the victim service field, we believe that coordination between compensation and assistance programs and among state assistance administrators can be improved by:

- *Continued expansion of training efforts to inform direct service providers about compensation.* It is very important to keep providers up-to-date on important changes in compensation policies or procedures. Training activities can be supported with the use of the state programs' administrative allowances.
- *Further efforts to make compensation materials available to direct service providers and provide increased access to the claims process.* Automation can be very helpful here; program brochures and applications can be (and often are) made available through the Internet, and states can develop automated claim filing and follow-up procedures.
- *Continued efforts to make compensation staff more responsive to claimants' needs, including training to inform compensation staff about assistance resources and victimization issues.* Compensation programs can hire dedicated victim liaisons/advocates, or train generalist staff, to provide services to claimants. These services need not be limited to help with the claim; they can also provide very valuable needs assessment and referrals. Specialized staff and training can be supported from the administrative allowance.
- *Expanded coordination activities to move beyond simple communication toward more active collaboration.* Only a minority of the state compensation and VOCA

assistance programs seem to become involved in each other's decision-making; these ties should be strengthened. Degree of co-location is an important factor in determining what needs to be done to enhance collaboration. Programs separated by wide administrative gulfs may need considerable effort to initiate collaboration mechanisms.

- *Enhanced coordination of the various sources of funding for direct service providers.* States should continue their efforts to maximize resources by leveraging the various victim assistance funding streams against each other. Again, degree of co-location of administrative offices may indicate what efforts are needed to improve coordination. Various mechanisms of coordination exist, with none clearly preferred over the others. States should examine what has worked well for them in efforts to date, and past missteps that could be avoided in the future.

Victims' Compensation and Assistance

HELP FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME: EARLY COMMUNITY, STATE, AND FEDERAL EFFORTS

Criminal victimization can have many harmful impacts on victims, and victims often need assistance with financial, physical, and emotional burdens imposed by the crime, and in navigating the criminal justice system. State legislatures began establishing and funding crime victims' compensation programs in the mid-1960's to help alleviate the financial impact of criminal victimization. By the early 1970's, local community groups, often motivated by dissatisfaction with the criminal justice system's response to victims, began establishing programs that provided support and advocacy services to survivors of violent crime, particularly domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. The U.S. Department of Justice, through the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), soon followed suit in 1974 by supporting the development of eight prosecutor-based and two law enforcement-based victim/witness pilot programs. The LEAA contributed a total of \$50 million to victim service programs during its tenure. Federal funding for victim assistance declined with the termination of the LEAA in the early 1980s. When the Report of the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime (1982) recommended that a federal funding stream was essential to the continued viability of both assistance and compensation programs, Congress responded by passing the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) in 1984.

FEDERAL FUNDING THROUGH THE VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT OF 1984

With the passage of VOCA, the federal government reasserted its role in the victim assistance field and provided significant resources for its continued expansion. VOCA established the Crime Victims' Fund (CVF), which is funded by fines, penalty assessments, and forfeitures in federal criminal cases, not by appropriated tax dollars. The Federal Courts Administration Act of 1992 removed an initial \$100 million cap on the Fund and eliminated the need for periodic reauthorization of VOCA and the CVF. The vast majority of the CVF is used in two major formula grant programs that supplement the states' provision of financial assistance and direct services to crime victims². The Victim Compensation Program receives up to 47.5 percent of CVF funds and is allocated to the states as a 60 percent³ payout on most state expenditures, so that about 37 percent of a state's total compensation funds are VOCA dollars.⁴ The Victim Assistance Program receives at least 47.5 percent of CVF funds and is allocated

² After set-asides to support a federal victim notification system, U.S. Attorneys' Office and FBI Victim Coordinators, child abuse investigations and prosecutions, discretionary programs for training and technical assistance, an international victim compensation program, and a reserve fund for assisting victims of terrorism or mass violence, or for offsetting fluctuations in CVF awards to the states.

³ The federal payout was 40 percent prior to its increase to 60 percent under the USA PATRIOT ACT of 2001. This increase takes effect with FY 2003 allocations.

according to a base amount and state populations. If 60 percent of combined state compensation expenditures is less than the 47.5 percent of the CVF reserved for federal compensation allocations, the remainder of the 48.5 percent is allocated to the assistance program. The remaining five percent of CVF funds is used for training and technical assistance projects sponsored by the agency that administers the CVF, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) within the U.S. Department of Justice.

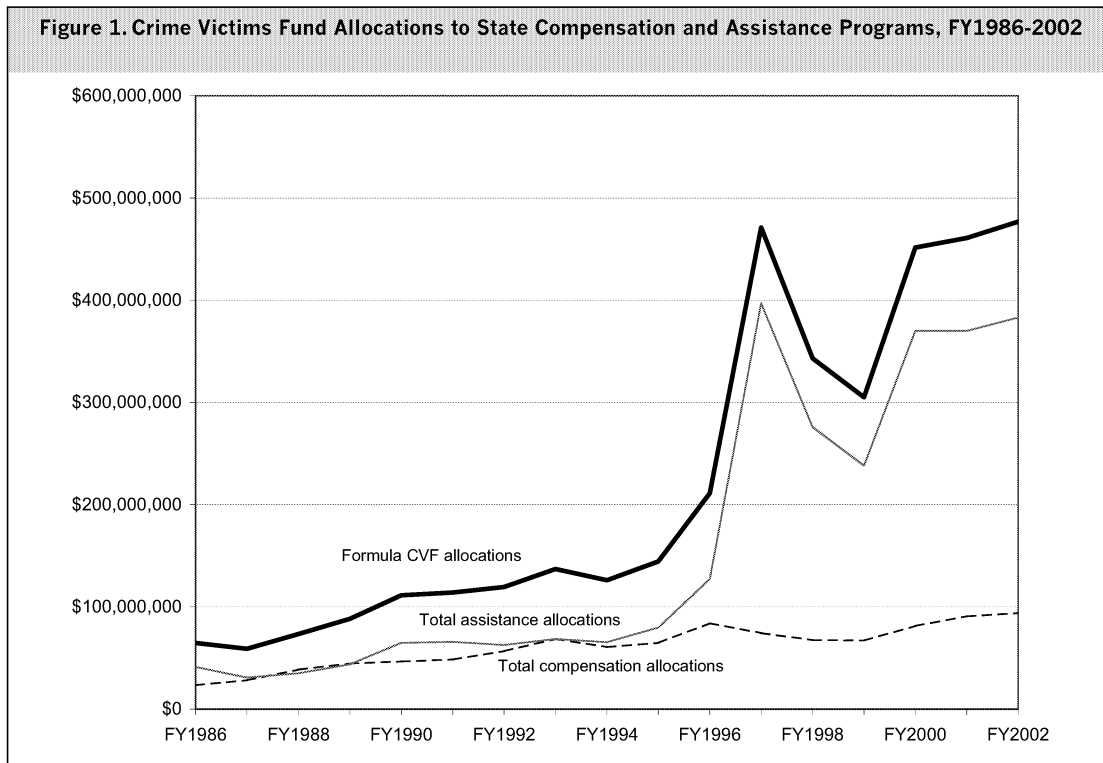
VOCA Purposes and Funding

Statutory language and OVC guidelines direct states to use these funds for:

- Enhancing accessibility to services, particularly for priority and underserved populations;
- Encouraging victim cooperation with criminal justice officials;
- Promoting coordinated public and private assistance efforts at the community level; and
- Maximizing resources to reduce the financial, physical, psychological, and emotional costs of victimization.

From 1986 through 2002, OVC awarded a total of \$3.7 billion to state victim compensation and assistance programs. Figure 1 presents year-by-year data for total CVF formula awards to participating states, and for compensation and assistance awards separately. These funds have grown from \$64.7 million in 1986 to \$477 million in 2002, a seven-fold increase. The funds grew steadily in the first ten years, increasing about 225 percent from 1986 to 1995. The sharpest inclines occurred over the last seven years, with an overall increase of over 300 percent from 1996 to 2002. These patterns reflect strengthened efforts by U.S. Attorneys and the Department of Justice's Antitrust Division to pursue fines from convicted offenders (OVC, 1999a). Some years, notably 1997, were record years due to large deposits into the Fund from substantial penalties in federal cases such as corporate fraud, antitrust, and price-fixing cases. Allocations for 2000 to 2002 were determined by Congressionally-imposed caps.

As of this writing the FY 2003 allocations will also be capped at approximately \$521 million for compensation and assistance. Compensation allocations will increase by as much as 75 percent from FY 2002 allocations, because of the recent change to the federal payout formula and high state expenditure amounts. Assistance allocations are likely to **decrease by close to seven percent** from FY 2002 allocations, because the proposed amount of the cap is not sufficient to offset changes in the compensation formula, and earmarks and set-asides. The amount left over since caps were first imposed for FY 2000 allocations will reach approximately **\$638 million** after FY 2003 allocations (although some of this may be used for the antiterrorism reserve fund). These funds have been retained in the CVF for crime victim-related purposes, as per the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act of 2000.



EVALUATING STATE VOCA PROGRAMS

The present research was commissioned by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) within the U.S. Department of Justice, with support from OVC, to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of state VOCA programs. The study's objectives were to describe how programs currently operate, lessons learned from the past, and promising directions for future developments. The decision to commission such a study was one product of a strategic planning meeting NIJ and OVC held in 1997, which focused on identifying victims (Lynch, 1997), the effects of victimization (Burt, 1997), and the structure and future of victim services (Brodie, 1997 and Friedman, 1997).

In light of the resources dedicated to VOCA, a careful evaluation of whether these programs are accomplishing what they were designed to do is vitally important. As part of a larger NIJ research program to examine this issue, the Urban Institute and the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) were selected to evaluate 1) the effectiveness and efficiency of VOCA services in meeting victim needs and 2) how victim assistance providers and compensation programs are coordinating to help deliver a seamless web of support to reduce the costs and consequences borne by victims of crime (recognizing that many other professions also serve victims). Another NIJ study (Brickman, 2002) occurring at the same time focused on victim needs, help sources, and unmet needs.

This evaluation had several phases and gathered information from state administrators; advocates, members of advisory bodies, and others who provide input on program administration; local service providers; and victims who have accessed compensation and assistance services. The various phases of the study are outlined below in Table 1.

Table 1. Overview of the Urban Institute/SANDAG National Evaluation of VOCA State Programs

Phase	Key Informants	Data Collection Methods
I	State Administrators, Members of Advisory Bodies, and Victim Advocates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compilation of descriptive program data from public sources ▪ Telephone survey with all state assistance and compensation administrators ▪ Site visits in six states to interview state assistance and compensation administrators, members of oversight bodies, and victim advocates
II	Local Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Site visits to three local assistance providers in each of the six selected states; 18 programs in total
III	Victims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus groups with clients at one community in five of the site visit states ▪ Telephone survey of 594 assistance clients served by 17 of the local providers visited ▪ Telephone survey of 452 compensation claimants in the six states visited

This is the final, cumulative report that presents all research tasks, findings, and recommendations. Victim assistance and compensation programs serve different functions, use different operating procedures, are often administered by different state agencies, and may serve different groups of victims. We therefore have separate chapters on each of these programs. Each chapter presents an integrated summary of all our work on that program, as well as the findings from each research phase separately. Issues of coordination between the two programs are discussed in each chapter.

Crime Victims' Compensation

As it is known today, crime victims' compensation is the state's means of recompensing some victims for certain expenses incurred as a result of the crime they suffered. This is distinguished from restitution and civil liability, which hold the offender directly accountable for repairing the harm done to his or her victim (it is of course possible to implement all approaches to helping victims simultaneously). Crime victim compensation is a direct payment to a crime victim or survivor, or a payment on the victim's behalf to those who have provided services to the victim. The first American legislation to provide crime victims' compensation was enacted in California in 1965 (similar legislation had been passed in New Zealand and England in the previous two years). California was quickly followed by New York, Hawaii, and Massachusetts in the next three years, and a total of 38 states had enacted compensation legislation and statewide programs by 1983 (Roberts, 1990). As of 2003, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam operate compensation programs that are funded by state funds and federal VOCA funds.

THE USES AND MANAGEMENT OF FEDERAL COMPENSATION FUNDS

Federal eligibility guidelines for 2001 developed by OVC address how VOCA compensation funds may be spent, and how the funds should be managed. Guidelines that address how the funds may be spent – eligible victims, crimes, and expenses – specify that:

- Compensation is for victims of violent crime with injury⁵ and for homicide victims' survivors; federal funds may be used for crisis counseling, mental health services, financial counseling, or similar services for victims of property crime, but not replacement of the property;
- VOCA compensation funds may be used to pay for victims' crime-related medical or dental costs; mental health counseling; funeral and burial costs; lost wages or loss of support; and crime scene clean-up expenses;⁶
- State compensation programs must promote victim cooperation with the reasonable requests of law enforcement authorities;⁷

⁵ Some states define injury as physical injury, while others do not (Parent, Auerbach, and Carlson, 1992).

⁶ States may pay other expenses at their discretion, but federal compensation funds are not to be used to pay for victims' property damage or property losses, except for personal medical devices.

⁷ States determine what constitutes "cooperation with reasonable requests." Frequently-used definitions include reporting the crime to a law enforcement agency (typically within 7 days or less), reporting to another governmental agency such as protective services or a court, or completing a medical evidentiary examination for sexual assault. States may also require cooperation with enforcement efforts of police and prosecutors, with exceptions for compelling safety reasons (Parent, Auerbach, and Carlson, 1992). OVC encourages states to examine what factors may discourage victims from cooperating with law enforcement (such as threats from the offender; age, psychological, cultural, or linguistic barriers; embarrassment and shame; and apprehension about law enforcement agencies) and how these barriers can be overcome.

- State compensation programs may not, except to prevent unjust enrichment of the offender, deny compensation to a victim because of his or her familial relationship or cohabitation with the offender; and
- Compensation must be available to victims of federal crimes, to residents of other states who are victimized in a given state, and to state residents who are victimized in another state, territory, or possession which does not have a compensation program. OVC has a new compensation program for victims of terrorist acts outside the U.S., so state programs are no longer required to serve those victims.

Additional OVC guidelines address how the VOCA funds should be managed by the state:

- State compensation programs have the year of award plus the following three years to obligate federal funds. For example, federal fiscal year 1997 funds were available for obligation from October 1, 1996 through September 30, 2000 (federal fiscal years 1997 through 2000);
- State compensation programs may use up to 5 percent of the federal award for administrative purposes;⁸ and
- State compensation programs may not use federal funds to supplant state funds otherwise available for crime victim compensation.

Additional State Regulations

Aside from these guidelines, the states have a good deal of discretion in how compensation funds are managed and spent, and regulations vary from state to state. State-imposed eligibility requirements address filing deadlines (generally from six months to three years after the crime), payor of last resort requirements, the victim's role in the crime, and the types of losses covered.

States consider compensation to be the payor of last resort for crime-related expenses, so that compensation is available only for those expenses not covered by private insurance, public insurance and benefits programs, restitution, civil damage awards, and any other sources of recompense. Since payment from some of these sources may take years to receive, compensation programs will often provide the victim with more timely payment with the understanding that funds received in the future for expenses paid by the compensation program will be forwarded to the compensation program (subrogation).

⁸ These funds may be used to support program personnel's salary and benefits; travel costs for attendance at training conferences; computer equipment and support services; audit costs; costs of producing and distributing program brochures, posters, and other outreach activities; professional fees for computer services and peer review of compensation claims; agency membership dues; program enhancements such as toll-free numbers; special equipment and materials to facilitate service to persons with disabilities; activities to improve coordination among public and private agencies; and to provide training to public and private organizations that serve crime victims.

The victim's role in the crime is an important element of eligibility for compensation. All states assess contributory misconduct – illegal or culpable behavior on the part of the victim at the time of the crime – in determining compensation awards. Some states deny awards entirely if claimants engaged in contributory misconduct, while other states reduce awards in proportion to the extent of misconduct. This is a very difficult issue for compensation programs; staff must often sift through several different versions of the crime to make decisions on a case-by-case basis.

In addition to covering the losses specified in federal guidelines, many states cover other crime-related expenses as well. These vary a good deal from state to state, and may include rehabilitation services, replacement services, transportation expenses, certain property losses, relocation expenses for some victims, and so on. Payments from state funds for these types of expenses may not be eligible for inclusion in calculations of the federal 60 percent payout.

FEDERAL FUNDING FOR VICTIMS' COMPENSATION

OVC has disbursed just over \$1 billion to state compensation programs from 1986 to 2002. See Figure 1 in the previous chapter for an illustration of trends in compensation funding over the years. Compensation allocations have grown from \$23.5 million in 1986 to \$94 million in 2002, a 400 percent increase. The pattern of growth has been one of fairly constant increase, with some modest fluctuations since 1994. The phenomenal growth of the Crime Victims Fund has not had a dramatic impact on the compensation allocations since they are tied to states' expenditures, rather than to the size of the Fund per se. There have been sufficient funds available to meet the federal payout in every year except FY 1988, when the payout was reduced about 2 percent due to insufficient collections into the CVF. A steep rise from FY 2002 to FY 2003 allocations is expected, however, assuming the expected 75 percent increase from \$94 million in 2002 to \$165 million in 2003 occurs. This is due to a change in the federal payout formula from 40 percent to 60 percent of state expenditures, effective for FY 2003 allocations, and high levels of state expenditures in FY 2001 (one year's federal payout is indexed to state expenditures two years previously).

STATE COMPENSATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

Performance data on state compensation programs are available on a state-by-state basis, as presented in Table 2. These data were obtained from the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards' (NACVCB) website (www.nacvcb.org) and Program Directory (NACVCB, 2002), and from OVC's website (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/fund/pdf/txt/02cvfalloc1.pdf) and OVC staff.⁹ These data profile how VOCA and state compensation funds are used by the states.

⁹ With many thanks to Linda Rost, Chris Farley, and Roy Blocher.

Administrative Agencies. Compensation programs are housed in a broad range of state agencies, including independent agencies, various criminal justice agencies including courts, human service agencies, and financial administration and labor agencies. Some states have locally-based offices in addition to or instead of a central office. About half are aligned with VOCA assistance programs – 28 states have assistance and compensation programs located within the same state agency, and sometimes within the same or sister offices within the agency. The implications of the type of administrative agency and co-location with the state’s assistance program are discussed in the assistance and compensation chapters of this report.

State Funding Sources. States receive VOCA allocations from OVC to help support their compensation programs, but about 70 percent of program funding comes from state sources. The federal funds come entirely from convicted federal offenders, in the form of fees, penalties, assessments, and the like. Most of the states and territories also rely entirely on various types of fees imposed on offenders for state funding of victim compensation programs (38 or 70 percent of the 54 states and territories with compensation programs). Another seven states and territories (13 percent) use both offender revenue and appropriations; in some cases the appropriated funds are used only for program administrative expenses. Eight states and territories (15 percent) rely entirely on appropriations for state funding of compensation programs. Taken together, the lion’s share of state and federal funding for victim compensation comes from criminal offenders.

Maximum Awards. All but two states impose a cap on the amount that can be awarded for a crime. These caps average about \$35,000, with a median of \$25,000 (meaning half the states have caps below this amount and half have caps above). States’ caps range from \$5,000 in Puerto Rico to \$180,000 in Washington. One state, New York, has no overall cap and no cap on medical expenses, but caps on other types of expenses. Iowa has no overall cap; each type of expense is capped, but the categorical cap depends on the type of crime and relationship to the victim.

Compensable Costs. All states pay victims’ expenses for medical/dental care, mental health counseling, economic support (including lost wages and loss of support), funeral/burial, and crime scene clean-up, as per federal guidelines. All states provide for additional types of expenses as well, for at least some victims (e.g., domestic violence victims), but the number and types of additional expenses vary considerably across states. These expenses may include moving expenses, replacement services (to pay for services previously performed by the victim, such as child care or housekeeping), travel expenses (to receive needed services or participate in the criminal case), rehabilitation services, attorney fees (for services directly related to the compensation process), emergency awards for immediate basic needs, replacement of stolen cash, and some property expenses related to providing security (such as replacing locks) or replacing items seized as evidence. Hawaii, Tennessee, and the Virgin Islands also pay pain and suffering.

Federal Allocations. OVC allocated nearly \$94 million to state compensation programs in FY 2002. Since allocations are based on state expenditures,¹⁰ states that award more funds in a given year receive a larger allocation from OVC two years later. Federal allocations ranged from \$3,000 to Guam to California's \$23.3 million. The average allocation was \$1.7 million, which is about the amount awarded to Pennsylvania. The median award (the point at which half the states got less and half got more) was \$630,000, or about the amount awarded to Arkansas or Virginia.

Claims Paid. The states and territories paid over 147,000 claims in 2001, averaging nearly 2,800 per state/territory and with a midpoint of nearly 1,000 per state/territory. These payments amounted to a total of \$367.5 million (nearly \$7 million per state on average), and averaged nearly \$2,800 per claim (with a midpoint of nearly \$2,400). Average award amounts vary a good deal across states, ranging from \$475 per claim in Nevada to Illinois' \$7,225 per claim (well below nearly every state's cap). States recently started reporting statistics on claims paid for crimes of domestic violence. In 2001, an average of 18 percent of all claims paid across the nation were for domestic violence-related crime. This ranges from no domestic violence-related claims in Alaska, to 80 percent of all paid claims in Indiana. However, domestic violence crimes represented more than 25 percent of all paid claims for only seven of the states and territories.

Amounts Paid by Type of Crime. Over half (55 percent) of compensation awards, on average, are paid for expenses related to assaults (which can include both domestic and non-domestic assault). Puerto Rico makes seven percent of its payments for assault and Maryland uses 80 percent of its awards for assault, but all save a few states fall within a 40 percent to 70 percent range.

The type of crime receiving the next largest percentage of compensation funds is homicide, at an average of 18 percent of awards across states. While homicide is much more rare than assault, it can involve additional types of expenses such as loss of support and funeral/burial expenses. Puerto Rico uses only one percent of its awards for homicide, while Connecticut uses 41 percent.

Victims of sexual assault receive only five percent of compensation payments on average, although Indiana, Nevada, and New Hampshire award 20 percent or more of their funds for sexual assault cases. In many states, the forensic/medical exam that many sexual assault victims receive is paid by criminal justice agencies, and another very common type of service needed by sexual assault victims— mental health counseling — is often available free of charge through community-based service providers (who may receive VOCA assistance funds).

Child abuse accounts for an average of eight percent of all compensation funds awarded across states, although a few states (California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Utah) spend 20 percent or

¹⁰ Effective FY 2003, the payout formula will increase from 40 percent to 60 percent of state expenditures, as per the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001.

more of their compensation funds on child abuse. As with sexual assault, some of the most commonly used services for these victims may be paid by other sources.

Claims for drunk driving average four percent of all funds paid. This does not vary much across states, equaling or exceeding ten percent in only Idaho, Massachusetts, and Minnesota. Robbery accounts for two percent of all compensation payments, rising to or above ten percent in only Michigan, Virginia, and the Virgin Islands. “Other” types of crime, including elder abuse, adults molested as children, and other crimes, average eight percent of funds paid by states. Puerto Rico reports 81 percent of its payments for “other” crimes, but Wisconsin is the only other state that pays more than 20 percent of compensation funds for “other” crimes.

Amounts Paid by Type of Expense. Nearly half (47 percent) of states’ expenditures, on average, are spent on medical/dental expenses. Six states pay less than 25 percent, and payments range up to 73 percent (in Maryland). Payments for mental health expenses average 9 percent across states, with 23 paying less than five percent and seven paying 20 percent or more (up to California’s 41 percent). Economic support (for lost wages or loss of support) is the second largest use of compensation fund, at 20 percent of payments by states. Hawaii and Vermont pay as little as four percent on economic support, and Connecticut pays 56 percent. Funeral and burial expenses average 13 percent of states’ payments, ranging from Alaska and Indiana’s two percent to Mississippi’s 31 percent. Many states report no crime-scene clean-up expenses, and others report very small payment amounts so that they round down to zero; only Vermont’s is enough to round to an even one percent. Eighteen states report making payments for sexual assault forensic exams, which range from one percent (North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin) to 31 percent (Indiana) of total state payments. This is an expense often paid by law enforcement or prosecution agencies. Finally, states pay an average of eight percent for “other” types of expenses, which would include transportation, rehabilitation, replacement services, and so on. This is (or rounds to) zero in many states, but goes as high as 87 percent in Rhode Island. Only 11 states report more than ten percent of payments for “other” types of expenses, demonstrating that the large majority of funds are used for the federally-required expenses.

Table 2. Performance Data on State Compensation Programs, FY 2001

State	Administrative Agency	State Funding Sources	Maximum Award	Additional Compensable Costs ¹	FY 2002 VOCA Allocation	Number of Claims Paid	Total Amount Paid	Average Award Amount	Percent of Domestic Violence Related Claims Paid
Alabama	Crime Victims Compensation Commission	Court costs and offender fees	\$15,000	Moving expenses, replacement services, travel, emergency, additional benefits for domestic violence victims	\$1,107,000	1,116	\$5,303,162	\$4,752	19%
Alaska	Violent Crimes Compensation Board, Department of Public Safety	Felony forfeitures	\$80,000	Moving expenses, travel, rehabilitation, attorney fees, emergency	\$319,000	376	\$901,869	\$2,399	0%
Arizona	Criminal Justice Commission (with county-based offices)	Penalty assessments and fines	\$20,000	Travel, emergency	\$566,000	982	\$2,763,589	\$2,814	29%
Arkansas	Crime Victims Reparations Board, Community Outreach Division, Office of the Attorney General	Mandatory court-cost assessments	\$25,000	Replacement services, travel, rehabilitation, attorney fees, emergency	\$650,000	951	\$1,738,047	\$1,828	16%
California	Victims of Crime Program, Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board (a central office WITH victim/witness centers throughout the state)	Offender fees	\$70,000	Moving expenses, rehabilitation, attorney fees, emergency	\$23,305,000	43,158	\$94,553,541	\$2,191	23%
Colorado	Division of Criminal Justice, Department of Public Safety (with offices in each judicial district)	Court fees	\$20,000	Moving expenses, replacement services, expenses to replace locks and secure residence, travel, emergency	\$2,016,000	10,543	\$9,827,280	\$932	26%
Connecticut	Office of Victim Services (under the judicial branch)	Offender fees and inmate wages	\$25,000	Attorney fees, emergency	\$583,000	535	\$2,046,895	\$3,826	3%
Delaware	Violent Crimes Compensation Board (under the judicial branch)	Offender fees	\$50,000	Moving expenses, attorney fees	\$228,000	290	\$1,051,302	\$3,625	16%
District of Columbia	Crime Victims Compensation Program, D.C. Superior Court	Offender fees and court revenues	\$25,000	Moving expenses, attorney fees, emergency	\$679,000	1,292	\$3,210,182	\$2,485	23%
Florida	Division of Victim Services and Criminal Justice Programs, Office of the Attorney General	Court costs and offender fees	\$50,000	Moving expenses, replacement services, property loss, travel, rehabilitation, emergency	\$5,268,000	11,230	\$26,230,400	\$2,336	36%

¹ In addition to federally-specified costs of medical/dental, mental health counseling, economic support, funeral/burial, and crime scene clean-up.

Table 2. Performance Data on State Compensation Programs, FY 2001

State	Administrative Agency	State Funding Sources	Maximum Award	Additional Compensable Costs ¹	FY 2002 VOCA Allocation	Number of Claims Paid	Total Amount Paid	Average Award Amount	Percent of Domestic Violence Related Claims Paid
Georgia	Crime Victim Compensation Program, Criminal Justice Coordinating Council	Offender, parolee, and probationer fees	\$10,000	Rehabilitation	\$1,260,000	2,099	\$5,231,778	\$2,493	9%
Hawaii	Crime Victims Compensation Commission	Offender fees and inmate wages	\$10,000	Replacement services, travel, rehabilitation, attorney fees, pain and suffering	\$438,000	1,010	\$1,049,258	\$1,039	22%
Idaho	Crime Victims Compensation Program, Industrial Commission	Offender fees	\$25,000	Replacement services, travel, rehabilitation, attorney fees, emergency	\$345,000	921	\$1,604,320	\$1,742	16%
Illinois	Crime Victims Compensation Bureau, Crime Victim Services Division, Office of the Attorney General. The Court of Claims has decision-making authority.	Annual appropriation	\$27,000	Moving expenses, replacement services, travel, rehabilitation, attorney fees, emergency	\$6,866,000	3,495	\$25,250,916	\$7,225	4%
Indiana	Violent Crime Victim Compensation Fund, Criminal Justice Institute	Court costs and offender wages	\$15,000	Attorney fees, emergency	\$405,000	5,242	\$4,710,117	\$899	80%
Iowa	Crime Victim Assistance Division, Department of Justice	Offender fees and criminal fines	No established maximum, each benefit has own limit	Attorney fees, emergency	\$1,035,000	2,117	\$3,599,693	\$1,700	24%
Kansas	Crime Victims Compensation Board, Office of the Attorney General	Court fines, penalties, and forfeitures; and prison inmate wages	\$25,000	Moving expenses, replacement services, replacement of clothing or bedding seized as evidence, travel, rehabilitation, attorney fees	\$905,000	823	\$2,515,232	\$3,056	17%
Kentucky	Crime Victims Compensation Board (independent executive branch agency)	Conviction fees	\$25,000	Travel, emergency	\$209,000	248	\$1,031,665	\$4,160	25%
Louisiana	Crime Victims Reparations Board, Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Criminal Justice (central staff and board with offices in each parish)	Conviction fees	\$25,000	Replacement services, travel, attorney fees, emergency	\$429,000	611	\$1,582,631	\$2,590	52%
Maine	Victims' Compensation Program, Office of the Attorney General	Offender fees	\$15,000	None	\$125,000	252	\$420,624	\$1,669	13%

Table 2. Performance Data on State Compensation Programs, FY 2001

State	Administrative Agency	State Funding Sources	Maximum Award	Additional Compensable Costs ¹	FY 2002 VOCA Allocation	Number of Claims Paid	Total Amount Paid	Average Award Amount	Percent of Domestic Violence Related Claims Paid
Maryland	Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services	Offender fees	\$45,000	Attorney fees, emergency	\$1,581,000	662	\$3,823,787	\$5,776	1%
Massachusetts	Victim Compensation and Assistance Division, Office of the Attorney General	Annual appropriation	\$25,000	Replacement services, travel, attorney fees	\$546,000	1,142	\$3,118,569	\$2,731	25%
Michigan	Crime Victims Services Commission	Annual appropriation	\$15,000	Replacement services, rehabilitation, travel, attorney fees, emergency	\$485,000	523	\$1,954,470	\$3,737	11%
Minnesota	Crime Victims Reparations Board, Center for Crime Victim Services, Department of Public Safety	General-revenue appropriation and inmate wages	\$50,000	Moving expenses, travel, rehabilitation, return of abducted child, emergency	\$728,000	1,286	\$3,042,496	\$2,366	17%
Mississippi	Crime Victim Compensation Program, Department of Finance and Administration	Offender, parolee and probationer fees	\$10,000	Travel, rehabilitation, emergency	\$501,000	721	\$1,322,299	\$1,834	24%
Missouri	Crime Victims' Compensation Unit, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations	Offender fees	\$25,000	Travel, attorney fees	\$1,482,000	1,108	\$5,622,057	\$5,074	7%
Montana	Crime Victim Compensation Program, Office of Victim Services and Restorative Justice, Department of Justice	State general funds	\$25,000	Travel, attorney fees, emergency awards	\$173,000	133	\$123,267	\$927	16%
Nebraska	Crime Victim Reparations Program, Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice	Annual appropriation, inmate wages	\$10,000	Attorney fees, emergency	\$109,000	92	\$404,642	\$4,398	18%
Nevada	Victims of Crime Program, Department of Administration	Offender fees, bail forfeitures, court assessments, and inmate wages	\$50,000	Travel, attorney fees	\$1,071,000	1,834	\$871,000	\$475	12%
New Hampshire	Victims' Assistance Commission, Department of Justice	Criminal fines	\$10,000	Moving expenses, travel, attorney fees	\$62,000	222	\$324,779	\$1,463	5%
New Jersey	Victims of Crime Compensation Board, Department of Law and Public Safety	Offender fees, prison purchases, and an annual appropriation for administrative expenses	\$50,000	Moving expenses, domestic services, stolen cash, travel, rehabilitation, attorney fees, emergency	\$1,335,000	1,010	\$4,054,662	\$4,015	1%

Table 2. Performance Data on State Compensation Programs, FY 2001

State	Administrative Agency	State Funding Sources	Maximum Award	Additional Compensable Costs ¹	FY 2002 VOCA Allocation	Number of Claims Paid	Total Amount Paid	Average Award Amount	Percent of Domestic Violence Related Claims Paid
New Mexico	Crime Victims Reparation Commission (Independent executive branch agency)	General appropriation, inmate wages	\$50,000	Travel, rehabilitation	\$364,000	706	\$1,287,373	\$1,823	21%
New York	Crime Victims Board (Independent executive branch agency)	Annual appropriations	No maximum for medical expenses, various maximums for other expenses	Moving expenses, property loss/security, travel, rehabilitation, attorney fees, emergency	\$6,190,000	12,310	\$24,858,898	\$2,019	10%
North Carolina	Crime Victims Compensation Program, Department of Crime Control and Public Safety	Annual appropriation, prison purchases, prison enterprise	\$65,000	Replacement services, travel, emergency	\$1,083,000	1,627	\$6,168,798	\$3,792	10%
North Dakota	Crime Victims Compensation Program, Division of Parole and Probation	Annual appropriation	\$25,000	Replacement services, travel, rehabilitation, attorney fees, emergency	\$93,000	150	\$302,258	\$2,015	17%
Ohio	Victims of Crime Compensation Program, Crime Victim Services Division, Office of the Attorney General. The Court of Claims has appellate jurisdiction.	Offender fees	\$50,000	Moving expenses, replacement services, travel, rehabilitation, attorney fees, emergency	\$2,499,000	4,707	\$15,396,045	\$3,271	10%
Oklahoma	Crime Victims Compensation Board, District Attorneys Council	Offender fees, funds left over from the Restitution Accounting Fund	\$20,000	Moving expenses, replacement services, travel, rehabilitation, attorney fees, emergency	\$679,000	977	\$2,914,045	\$2,983	11%
Oregon	Crime Victims Assistance Section, Department of Justice	Offender fees, awards from punitive damages in civil cases	\$44,000	Replacement services, travel, rehabilitation, emergency	\$890,000	2,325	\$2,067,055	\$889	13%
Pennsylvania	Victims Compensation Division, Bureau of Victims Services, Commission on Crime and Delinquency	Conviction fees	\$35,000	Replacement services, travel, rehabilitation, replacement of stolen cash, attorney fees, emergency	\$1,833,000	2,301	\$8,222,011	\$3,573	5%
Rhode Island	Crime Victim Compensation Program, Office of General Treasurer	Offender fees, and a legislative appropriation for administrative expenses	\$25,000	Attorney fees, emergency	\$1,500,000	639	\$4,456,870	\$6,975	8%
South Carolina	Office of Victim Assistance, Office of the Governor	Offender fees, fines, and assessments	\$25,000	Travel, rehabilitation, attorney fees, emergency	\$2,443,000	3,086	\$7,654,926	\$2,481	11%

Table 2. Performance Data on State Compensation Programs, FY 2001

State	Administrative Agency	State Funding Sources	Maximum Award	Additional Compensable Costs ¹	FY 2002 VOCA Allocation	Number of Claims Paid	Total Amount Paid	Average Award Amount	Percent of Domestic Violence Related Claims Paid
South Dakota	Crime Victims' Compensation Program, Office of Adult Services and Aging, Department of Social Services	Conviction fees	\$15,000	Replacement services, travel, rehabilitation, emergency	\$97,000	340	\$394,583	\$1,161	35%
Tennessee	Criminal Injuries Compensation Program, Division of Claims Administration, Treasury Department	Offender fees, parolee wages, sales of illegal contraband, bond forfeitures, and juror reimbursement donations	\$30,000	Moving expenses, travel, rehabilitation, pain and suffering, attorney fees, emergency	\$2,070,000	1,781	\$10,019,876	\$5,626	24%
Texas	Crime Victims Compensation Division, Office of the Attorney General	Offender fees	\$125,000	Moving expenses, replacement services, travel, rehabilitation, attorney fees, emergency	\$12,455,000	9,706	\$41,309,782	\$4,256	21%
Utah	Office of Crime Victim Reparations, Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice	Offender fines, penalties, forfeitures and surcharges	\$50,000	Moving expenses, replacement services, travel, rehabilitation, attorney fees, emergency	\$1,418,000	2,854	\$4,115,807	\$1,442	24%
Vermont	Victim Compensation Program, Center for Crime Victim Services	Surcharges on criminal convictions	\$10,000	Moving expenses, replacement services, travel, rehabilitation, attorney fees, emergency	\$120,000	544	\$575,843	\$1,059	31%
Virginia	Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund, Workers' Compensation Commission	Offender fees	\$15,000	Moving expenses, replacement services, travel, emergency, additional benefits for domestic violence victims	\$611,000	1,444	\$3,213,403	\$2,225	18%
Washington	Crime Victim Compensation Program, Department of Labor and Industries	Court revenues	\$180,000	Travel, rehabilitation	\$3,521,000	3,596	\$10,200,080	\$2,837	14%
West Virginia	Crime Victims Compensation Fund, Court of Claims	Offender fees	\$100,000	Moving expenses, travel, replacement services, rehabilitation, attorney fees	\$527,000	664	\$1,532,756	\$2,308	13%
Wisconsin	Office of Crime Victims Services, Department of Justice	Annual appropriation	\$42,000	Replacement services, attorney fees, emergency	\$556,000	1,237	\$2,507,350	\$2,027	7%
Wyoming	Division of Victim Services, Office of the Attorney General	Court-ordered assessments on convictions	\$25,000	Moving expenses, replacement services, travel, emergency, additional benefits for domestic violence victims	\$86,000	293	\$599,992	\$2,048	24%

Table 2. Performance Data on State Compensation Programs, FY 2001

State	Administrative Agency	State Funding Sources	Maximum Award	Additional Compensable Costs ¹	FY 2002 VOCA Allocation	Number of Claims Paid	Total Amount Paid	Average Award Amount	Percent of Domestic Violence Related Claims Paid
Guam	Not available	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$3,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Puerto Rico	Office for Crime Victims Compensation, Department of Justice	Annual appropriation, offender fees	\$5,000	Emergency	\$43,000	162	\$218,828	\$1,351	5%
Virgin Islands	Criminal Victims Compensation Commission, Department of Human Services	Annual appropriation	\$25,000	Replacement services, travel, pain and suffering, attorney fees, emergency	\$65,000	47	\$240,098	\$5,108	4%
Total					\$93,957,000	147,520	\$367,541,206		
Mean²			\$34,585 ³		\$1,739,944	2,783	\$6,934,740	\$2,789	18%
Median⁴			\$25,000 ⁵		\$630,000	996	\$2,639,511	\$2,383	16%

² Computed without Guam for all columns except for "FY 2002 VOCA allocation" column.

³ Does not include Iowa, New York, or Guam.

⁴ Computed without Guam for all columns except for "FY 2002 VOCA allocation" column.

⁵ Does not include Iowa, New York, or Guam.

Table 2 continued. Performance Data on State Compensation Programs, FY 2001

State	Percent of Amounts Paid by Type of Crime										Percent of Amounts Paid by Type of Expense						
	Assault	Homicide	Sexual Assault	Child Abuse	DWI/DUI	Robbery	Other ¹	Medical / Dental	Mental health	Economic Support	Funeral/Burial	Crime Scene Clean-up	Forensic Sexual Assault Exams	Other			
Alabama	61%	20%	2%	4%	0%	2%	11%	58%	3%	16%	17%	2%	4%				
Alaska	48%	11%	12%	6%	7%	0%	16%	57%	9%	19%	2%	0%	13%				
Arizona	46%	33%	3%	5%	6%	1%	6%	48%	13%	22%	17%	0%	0%				
Arkansas	53%	27%	3%	9%	3%	1%	4%	45%	10%	10%	21%	14%	1%				
California	44%	16%	4%	23%	2%	4%	6%	37%	41%	13%	9%	0%	1%				
Colorado	47%	10%	4%	17%	5%	1%	16%	41%	28%	16%	12%	0%	3%				
Connecticut	50%	41%	1%	4%	4%	0%	0%	30%	3%	56%	9%	0%	2%				
Delaware	65%	9%	4%	3%	6%	1%	12%	51%	6%	23%	6%	0%	7%				
District Of Columbia	58%	24%	3%	12%	0%	0%	3%	38%	13%	16%	22%	0%	11%				
Florida	58%	14%	4%	3%	6%	4%	12%	27%	6%	31%	9%	0%	22%				
Georgia	62%	20%	2%	3%	3%	0%	10%	66%	2%	13%	19%	0%	0%				
Hawaii	51%	7%	11%	27%	0%	0%	5%	23%	8%	4%	4%	0%	61%				
Idaho	58%	10%	4%	10%	12%	0%	7%	66%	17%	14%	3%	0%	0%				
Illinois	69%	20%	1%	1%	2%	0%	7%	72%	1%	14%	12%	0%	1%				
Indiana	43%	12%	20%	13%	1%	1%	11%	35%	1%	31%	2%	0%	0%				
Iowa	53%	16%	4%	8%	4%	2%	14%	45%	12%	22%	10%	0%	0%				
Kansas	68%	13%	2%	6%	3%	2%	5%	64%	6%	17%	13%	0%	1%				
Kentucky	75%	24%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	69%	2%	8%	22%	0%	0%				
Louisiana	45%	35%	5%	3%	4%	7%	2%	48%	5%	17%	28%	0%	2%				
Maine	49%	13%	12%	13%	8%	0%	5%	38%	24%	26%	10%	0%	0%				
Maryland	81%	17%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	73%	0%	14%	13%	0%	0%				
Massachusetts	51%	24%	7%	4%	10%	0%	4%	23%	14%	52%	11%	0%	0%				
Michigan	65%	16%	2%	0%	1%	15%	1%	66%	1%	20%	11%	0%	2%				
Minnesota	44%	35%	2%	5%	12%	2%	1%	33%	4%	30%	26%	0%	7%				
Mississippi	61%	31%	1%	2%	4%	1%	1%	49%	3%	17%	31%	0%	0%				
Missouri	58%	22%	1%	1%	4%	8%	6%	62%	2%	15%	21%	0%	0%				
Montana	73%	9%	2%	12%	2%	0%	1%	66%	19%	7%	8%	0%	0%				
Nebraska	49%	36%	3%	1%	7%	1%	2%	50%	1%	22%	24%	0%	4%				
Nevada	50%	5%	28%	1%	3%	8%	5%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A				

¹ Includes elder abuse, adults molested as children, other.

Table 2 continued. Performance Data on State Compensation Programs, FY 2001

State	Percent of Amounts Paid by Type of Crime										Percent of Amounts Paid by Type of Expense						
	Assault	Homicide	Sexual Assault	Child Abuse	DWI/DUI	Robbery	Other ¹	Medical / Dental	Mental health	Economic Support	Funeral/Burial	Crime Scene Clean-up	Forensic Sexual Assault Exams	Other			
New Hampshire	44%	14%	24%	11%	2%	1%	5%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A				
New Jersey	64%	20%	2%	12%	1%	1%	1%	48%	23%	12%	0%	0%	3%				
New Mexico	43%	16%	4%	15%	4%	0%	18%	0%	12%	11%	0%	0%	59%				
New York	52%	18%	3%	4%	2%	3%	18%	61%	13%	15%	0%	0%	5%				
North Carolina	70%	18%	3%	4%	4%	0%	1%	60%	15%	22%	0%	0%	0%				
North Dakota	68%	4%	3%	11%	0%	0%	14%	68%	21%	6%	0%	1%	0%				
Ohio	52%	15%	9%	2%	3%	4%	14%	27%	42%	7%	0%	14%	8%				
Oklahoma	57%	29%	4%	4%	5%	0%	1%	60%	11%	21%	0%	3%	3%				
Oregon	45%	13%	3%	29%	5%	0%	4%	39%	18%	8%	0%	12%	1%				
Pennsylvania	66%	17%	1%	2%	8%	0%	6%	46%	28%	11%	0%	2%	11%				
Rhode Island	56%	6%	14%	17%	3%	1%	2%	4%	5%	4%	0%	0%	87%				
South Carolina	68%	12%	2%	5%	3%	3%	7%	60%	17%	11%	0%	5%	0%				
South Dakota	70%	8%	3%	13%	1%	0%	4%	63%	5%	5%	0%	1%	0%				
Tennessee	35%	32%	6%	12%	5%	9%	1%	31%	40%	11%	0%	0%	17%				
Texas	55%	14%	2%	7%	6%	6%	11%	56%	24%	9%	0%	0%	6%				
Utah	60%	8%	4%	20%	5%	1%	3%	41%	9%	5%	0%	4%	15%				
Vermont	35%	23%	6%	19%	2%	0%	15%	20%	13%	24%	1%	6%	11%				
Virginia	58%	24%	4%	3%	1%	10%	0%	62%	11%	22%	0%	0%	1%				
Washington	47%	14%	15%	6%	5%	3%	8%	29%	46%	6%	0%	10%	0%				
West Virginia	58%	19%	2%	2%	9%	5%	7%	58%	26%	10%	0%	0%	2%				
Wisconsin	50%	14%	5%	5%	2%	4%	21%	57%	29%	6%	0%	1%	1%				
Wyoming	80%	4%	3%	6%	5%	0%	1%	69%	13%	5%	0%	0%	6%				
Guam	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A				
Puerto Rico	7%	1%	2%	9%	0%	0%	81%	11%	39%	46%	0%	0%	1%				
Virgin Islands	55%	25%	3%	0%	0%	17%	0%	56%	4%	13%	0%	0%	27%				
Mean ²	56%	18%	5%	8%	4%	3%	8%	47%	20%	13%	0%	3%	8%				
Median	55%	16%	3%	5%	3%	1%	5%	49%	17%	11%	0%	0%	2%				

¹ Includes elder abuse, adults molested as children, other.

² Calculations for mean and median do not include Nevada, New Hampshire, and Guam for categories listed under "Percent of Amounts Paid by Type of Expense," nor Guam for categories listed under "Percent of Amounts Paid by Type of Crime."

PRIOR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS

Several substantial efforts have been undertaken to identify issues pertaining to program operations and performance and to encourage efforts to address problems. The National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards (NACVCB) provides its member programs with many services, including a set of program standards developed by an advisory board of state compensation program administrators, state and local public and non-profit victim assistance providers, individual victim advocates and national advocacy organizations, and OVC personnel. NACVCB's Program Standards (1996) specify goals, objectives, and basic and advanced strategies to improve program operations in four key areas:

- *Effective Outreach, Training and Communication:* Inform as many victims as possible about compensation and communicate effectively and sensitively with victims and with groups that work with them or on their behalf.
- *Expedient and Accurate Claims Processing:* Process applications as quickly, accurately, and efficiently as possible so that eligible victims may receive funds promptly and in accordance with compensation regulations.
- *Good Decision Making:* Make fair, consistent, and prompt claims payment decisions in accordance with statutory requirements and in furtherance of the basic mission to serve crime victims.
- *Sound Financial Planning:* Ensure that sufficient funds exist for the compensation program to pay all eligible applicants for all compensable costs.

NACVCB has suggested increasing the 5 percent administrative allowance to provide more staff to handle larger caseloads and keep case processing times down; to launch greater outreach and training efforts; and to obtain or upgrade automated systems for more efficient and accurate case processing. The median compensation award to states in FY2002 was \$630,000, which means that a median of up to \$31,500 (5 percent) can be used for administrative purposes. This amount can fund only a small portion of the efforts needed to improve services. While half the states get more administrative funds than this, half the states get even less.

Another major effort to encourage improvements in victim services has recently been completed. *New Directions From the Field: Victims' Rights and Services for the 21st Century* (Office for Victims of Crime, 1998), and its companion piece, *Strategies for Implementation — Tools for Action Guide* (Office for Victims of Crime, 2000) is the first comprehensive plan for improving and expanding services for victims of violent crime since the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime issued its recommendations in 1982. It contains over 250 recommendations for improving service to victims in a wide variety of professions, drawing on input from over 1000 experts from victim advocates and service providers, criminal and juvenile justice agencies, and allied professions. These recommendations include improvements for victim compensation programs and victim assistance providers, among many other professionals who work with victims.

Recommendations for improvements in victim compensation cover a number of areas, and can be grouped into recommendations regarding program management, and recommendations regarding service enhancements.

Recommendations on Program Management. State programs should strive to make the following improvements to program operations (OVC, 1998):

- *Financial Management.* Although both VOCA and state funds have increased since 1984, some states continue to experience funding shortages. Programs should work to expand funding sources and implement cost control mechanisms. Programs should ensure that any excess funds are used to support victim assistance activities.
- *Expeditious Claims Processing.* States should strive to process all claims within 12-21 weeks. Emergency funds should be awarded within 24 hours. States should explore how technological advances, such as the Internet and automated case management systems, can enhance the application process and improve case processing times by assisting in obtaining necessary verifications. VOCA administrative allowances can be used in these efforts.
- *Coordination with Victim Assistance.* Compensation programs should coordinate with administrators of VOCA and other sources of victim assistance funding to identify services to which victims can be referred, and to ensure that victims' needs are met comprehensively across the state.
- *Victims' Input.* Victims should be recruited to serve on boards, commissions, or other advisory groups that assist with program development and implementation. Victim service providers should also provide input and coordinate their services with the compensation program's services.
- *Evaluation.* States should evaluate the effectiveness of their outreach efforts and services; barriers to accessing compensation; any special groups of victims that may be underserved; claims processing efficiency; and reasons for denials of claims. Steps needed to improve services and operations should be identified and implemented.

Recommendations on Service Expansion. Programs should strive to expand their services by reaching new victims, expanding benefits, and loosening requirements.

- *Outreach to Victims.* States should widely publicize the availability of compensation benefits through efforts designed to reach special population groups which may not be accessing compensation because of cultural or language barriers. Compensation programs can also reach out to victims through victim service advocates and providers, police officers, and others who have direct contact with them. Compensation programs should provide these groups with information and materials to encourage them to refer victims to compensation and assist victims in the application process. Victim advocates employed by compensation programs not only sensitize other staff to victimization issues, but provide critical advocacy, referral, information, and other services to victims. Victims should be eligible for

compensation regardless of their nationality, and this principle should apply to all state programs in this country as well as other nations' compensation programs.

- *Mental Health Counseling Benefits.* Compensation programs should review their guidelines for covering mental health treatment. Over half the states place restrictions on the level of mental health benefits that qualify for coverage, and some advocates are concerned that these limits are too low. Compensation staff should develop standards with input from the mental health community. Programs should also expand the types of victims eligible to receive counseling.
- *Medical Benefits for Catastrophic Injuries.* States should increase their caps on these types of payments, and should cover expenses such as medically necessary devices and building modifications.
- *Other Benefits.* Compensation programs should cover transportation costs of victims who must travel across state lines to attend criminal proceedings. Programs should also plan for changes in benefit needs should health care insurance coverage become more universal. For example, other nations with national health care can use compensation funds to address the effects of long-term psychological or physical injuries, pay for pain and suffering, and reimburse property losses.
- *Reporting Requirements.* Some victims are reluctant to report to police, such as victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and gang violence, and as a result may not be eligible for compensation due to lack of timely reporting. States should extend reporting deadlines and allow reports by third parties or to other agencies, such as family courts (e.g., filing for a protection order in a domestic violence case).
- *Filing Deadlines.* Some victims miss claim filing deadlines because of significant victimization trauma, and others because they do not learn of compensation until much later. Filing deadlines should be eliminated or at least extended to three years from the crime.

Recommendations for improved program management and service expansion reinforce the findings of earlier research. McCormack (1991) found that victim access to compensation varied widely across states, indicating the need for greater outreach. Parent, Auerbach, and Carlson (1992) described a number of policy and procedural issues for compensation programs, and Sarnoff (1996) recommended improvements in various areas, including many of those discussed in *New Directions*.

OUR EVALUATION OF STATE COMPENSATION PROGRAMS

We employed a three-pronged approach to our evaluation of compensation programs. We began with a telephone survey of all state administrators in the nation, in 1999. The purpose of this survey was to obtain a broad-based picture of the fundamental policy and operational issues confronting programs. We then selected six states for in depth analysis of these issues, through two rounds of site visits to each state. In the first visit we interviewed state program administrators, members of oversight bodies, and victim advocacy groups. In the second round, we interviewed VOCA-funded direct service providers in three communities in each of the six

states, and discussed among other topics the victim compensation program. We also conducted focus groups with victims in five of these site visits; compensation was one topic of discussion. Finally, we conducted telephone surveys with over 450 compensation claimants in these six states, to get the clients' perspectives on program policies and functioning.

The remainder of this chapter on compensation presents each phase of the research, followed by a summary section that integrates the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from all phases of the research.

THE 1999 SURVEY OF STATE COMPENSATION ADMINISTRATORS

This evaluation began collecting data on current policies, practices, contentious issues, and areas for further development in state programs from a telephone survey of all 52 state administrators in 1999. We spoke with the administrator directly in charge of the program or his or her designee. The survey instrument appears in Appendix A. Our results can also be compared with NACVCB's program standards and the recommendations offered in *New Directions* to identify areas in which programs have made a great deal of progress, and areas in which further efforts are needed. We begin with general conclusions and recommendations based on the information obtained in the survey. The specific findings are then organized into content areas, with an italicized summary and recommendations preceding a fuller discussion of the results.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings from program performance data and our survey of administrators paint a picture of compensation programs which are generally functioning in accordance with identified goals and standards (e.g., NACVCB, 1996; OVC, 1998). In general, states seem to be performing the most essential activities to implement good financial planning, outreach, claims processing and decision-making, coordination with victim assistance programs, program administration, and training. More advanced activities could, however, be implemented in each of these areas to further enhance program functioning and services to victims, in accordance with recommendations from NACVCB's and OVC's expert panels. Advanced activities include:

- *Financial Planning*: State legislatures and advocacy groups should support efforts to expand benefits in states with revenues that exceed payout needs, and efforts to raise additional funds to better meet victims' needs in states with a funding shortfall. The latter efforts have become particularly important in the last four years since the survey was conducted, as state budget crises, rising crime rates, and rising crime costs have led to fiscal challenges to many compensation programs. One way of raising additional revenue that has been successful is the increase of the federal payout formula from 40 percent to 60 percent of state expenditures, effective with FY 2003 allocations.
- *Outreach to Victims*: States should consider making greater use of technology and other innovative means to reach out to victims. Efforts should also focus on reaching victim groups (defined by type of crime and victims' characteristics) who

have not been well-represented in claimant rolls. Working closely with groups who represent or serve these victims may be very useful in identifying and overcoming barriers to accessing compensation. Issues which may arise when one type of provider (e.g., victim/witness staff in prosecutors' offices) is the primary source of help in accessing compensation should be examined and addressed.

- *Claims Processing and Decision-Making:* Processing time could be improved by streamlining and resolving delays in verification procedures. Efforts to increase payment caps where needed, such as for funeral expenses, should be supported. Special efforts may be needed to enhance the general understanding and improve how programs apply the concept of contributory misconduct.
- *Coordination:* Coordination with victim assistance programs should move beyond communication and toward active collaboration, to further the goal of building a seamless web of support for victims.
- *Program Administration:* As state programs expand, additional efforts should be focused on strategic planning, needs assessments, and the promotion of innovative approaches to serving victims. Technical assistance from OVC and others with expertise in these areas may be needed to help administrators explore these new areas in productive ways.
- *Training:* Training efforts should continue to include members of the justice system and members of other professions who work with victims, such as health and mental health care providers, funeral directors, school personnel, and representatives of Indian tribes and other ethnic or racial minorities. Informing a broader range of professionals about compensation should help reach a broader range of victims.

This broad range of activities could be supported under the VOCA administrative allowance. Increases in this allowance would facilitate states' efforts to undertake these expansions. It is important to note that success in these activities would certainly produce more demand on funds for awarding claims, suggesting the need to increase overall allocations in conjunction with additional funding to enhance program operations. Better-functioning programs would need more funds for awards because they would meet victims' needs more completely. At this writing the federal payout formula recently increased by 50 percent, although the percentage that can be used for administrative activities has not increased. It may be very challenging for many states to administer a significantly larger pot of funds if support for administrative activities remains relatively low.

Financial Planning

One of NACVCB's program standards addresses sound financial planning, with the goal of ensuring sufficient funding to pay all eligible applicants for all compensable costs. New Directions recommends that programs with fiscal shortfalls seek to expand funding sources and contain costs, while those with excess funds should direct the excess to activities to benefit victims. At the time of the 1999 survey, it seemed that most of the states were in reasonably sound fiscal condition and were taking steps to expand benefits for victims. Of the few states with insufficient funding, most were taking steps to increase

funding and contain costs, in accordance with program standards and recommendations. However, it is important to note that a number of changes have occurred in the last four years that have altered this fiscal picture radically for many states, so that compensation programs are now facing serious threats to their fiscal stability. The recent increase in the federal payout formula may help programs meet financial challenges, as long as funds are retained for use by compensation programs.

In our 1999 survey, we found that 42 (81 percent) of state administrators reported having sufficient funds to pay claims determined as eligible, and 35 (67 percent) reported having revenues which exceeded their immediate payout needs. Nearly all of those with revenues exceeding payout needs were considering ways to expand the compensation program by increasing benefits to victims, most often expanding the list of eligible expenses, raising payment caps, and expanding the definition of eligible claimants. Nearly half the states were also considering expanding the types of crime covered, and about one-third were considering changes in filing deadlines or reporting requirements.

The administrators with sufficient funds to pay claims were also asked to provide information about funds carried forward from year to year, since VOCA has allowed a four-year obligation period since 1997 (prior to that it was a three-year period). Carrying funds forward can be a sign of prudent financial planning. Most states provide supplemental awards, primarily for mental health counseling, to cover payments for future services the victim needs after the initial award determination is made. Since the number of treatments and length of time over which treatment is needed varies a good deal, supplemental awards require states to carry a reserve from year to year so that they can honor payment commitments (Parent, Auerbach, and Carlson, 1992).

Most of the states have carried funds forward since at least 1996. The average total amount of compensation funds (federal plus state) carried forward from 1996 to 1997, from 1997 to 1998, and from 1998 to 1999 was about \$1.8 million per year. The average amount of federal funding received in these years was about \$1.5 million per year, meaning that states carried forward slightly more than the federal allocation amount for each year. The fact that the amount carried forward each year has not increased much from year to year indicates that the states are expending their funds within the first several years of the four-year obligation period.

Ten states reported having insufficient funds to pay eligible claims. Some of these states reported efforts to raise funds and contain costs, including efforts to order and collect restitution and pursue subrogation (60 percent of these states), seeking additional state appropriations (40 percent of these states), and paying less than the full amount of the claim (60 percent of these states).

The fiscal situation has, however, changed considerably since the 1999 survey for many programs. Because of state budget crises, a rising number of uninsured Americans, cuts in insurance and Medicaid, a rise in violent crime rates for the first time in ten years, and exploding

health care costs, many programs are facing fiscal crisis. One-fourth of compensation programs have had funds taken away by state legislatures for use in funding other programs. Thirty-seven states reduced their enacted budgets in FY 2002 (NACVCB 2002). The increase of the federal payout from 40 percent to 60 percent of state expenditures may help states retain financial stability, as long as funds are retained for use by compensation programs and not “raided” by state legislatures to fund other programs, as has recently happened in some states (NACVCB, 2002).

Outreach and Services to Victims

State administrators feel that many potentially eligible victims do not apply for compensation. This suggests a need for greater outreach and services to recruit more qualified and complete applications. Compensation programs are working to publicize their services by providing training and materials to those who work with victims, particularly victim service agencies and criminal justice personnel. Many states also provide a toll-free number for victims to reach the compensation program. Fewer states, however, reported using technology or special efforts to target underserved groups in their outreach activities. Clearly, outreach efforts are being made but there is still much room for further development. Prosecutors' offices are reported to make the most referrals to compensation, which is not surprising since in many states it may be the prosecutor-based victim service staff who typically assist victims with the compensation process as per state victims' rights legislation. While there are efficiencies in centralizing the function of assisting victims with compensation in one location (such as prosecutors' offices), complications may arise in some situations (such as non-prosecuted cases or prosecutors' offices without victim/witness staff) unless victim service providers from other agencies are available to fill in the gaps. Compensation programs report providing a variety of services to claimants, including taking responsibility for the verification process, referring claimants to local service providers, having a victim liaison on staff in nearly half the states, and identifying repeat claimants who may need crime prevention services.

We asked administrators whether they thought they received about the right number of claims, given victims' needs and crime statistics.¹¹ Despite the fact that the number of claims is on the rise for about half the states (most often attributed to better outreach to potential claimants and better assistance in the claims process by service providers),¹² the vast majority of administrators (81 percent) felt they receive too few claims. In only six states did the administrators feel they receive the right number of claims, and only one state reported receiving

¹¹ However, it should be remembered that states vary in how they define what a claim is; nearly two-thirds of the states count one claim per crime regardless of filings by secondary victims, which may result in multiple filings per crime being counted as one claim. The other one-third of the states open new claims for secondary victims of a given crime, so that a single crime can result in multiple claims. Clearly statistics on the number of claims received may be higher in the latter group because of differences across states in claims classification procedures, rather than real differences in rates of filing claims.

¹² About one-quarter of the states had experienced a drop in number of claims filed in recent years prior to this survey, which administrators attributed primarily to the falling crime rate and greater availability of other sources of recompense (e.g., health insurance, public assistance, or restitution).

too many claims. There is clearly a widespread perception that many potentially eligible victims do not access compensation.

Compensation programs report a wide variety of methods to reach victims both directly and indirectly through those who work with victims. At least three-quarters of the states attempt to reach victims through brochures distributed by victim service agencies, by training victim service providers and criminal justice personnel on compensation, and through a toll-free number available to victims. At least half the states reported other outreach activities including training health care providers and providing notification cards handed out by police and victim service providers. Fewer than half the states make applications available on the Internet, provide applications or brochures or radio/TV announcements in other languages, provide a TDD line for the hearing impaired, make translators available by telephone, work with community organizations such as schools or churches, or use billboards or other printed notices in high crime areas. These reports indicate that, while many states are employing a variety of outreach activities, in the future more states could focus outreach activities on special population groups, such as the non-English-speaking, and use more innovative methods of outreach, in line with recommendations from *New Directions*.

Nearly all the states (83 percent) have legislation that specifies victims' rights to be notified about the compensation program. In about two-thirds of these states, law enforcement officers are required by law to inform victims. Prosecutors are required to inform victims in over half these states. When asked to estimate who refers victims to compensation most frequently, over half the states named prosecutors' offices, with police and victim service programs falling a distant second and third. The predominance of prosecutors' offices as a source of referrals may indicate that in many areas it is the victim/witness staff in prosecutors' offices who work with victims on their compensation claims, perhaps in part because victim service staff are less often employed in law enforcement agencies. This does not necessarily mean that police and nonprofit victim service providers do not inform victims of compensation; they may be the ones referring victims to the prosecutorial staff for assistance with compensation forms and procedures. While there are efficiencies in centralizing the function of assisting victims with compensation in one location (such as prosecutors' offices), complications may arise in some situations (such as non-prosecuted cases or prosecutors' offices without victim/witness staff) unless victim service providers from other agencies are available to fill in the gaps.

Once a victim has learned of compensation possibilities and filed a claim, verification is required to document the eligibility of the claim and to satisfy fiscal responsibilities in the handling of public funds. In the majority of states, the compensation staff are responsible for obtaining verifying information from law enforcement, service providers, and employers, relieving the victim of this task.

Most states (85 percent) will, in addition to handling the compensation claim, provide referral services to victims. Referrals are made to a wide variety of services, especially

prosecution-based advocates (perhaps for assistance in completing the claim form or process) and domestic violence programs.

Service provision to victims can be enhanced by the presence of a designated victim advocate or liaison on the compensation staff. Nearly half (42 percent) of the states have someone on staff to handle phone calls, complaints, questions, assist with forms, and make referrals, in line with suggestions from *New Directions*. Five states have an advocate position in the compensation program supported by VOCA assistance funds.

Nearly every state (94 percent) also has procedures to identify repeat claimants. Many programs use this information to identify repeat victims who need additional victim services (such as crime prevention), or to investigate possible fraud. Some also use the information for case management purposes, such as avoiding duplication of records or staff assignments.

Claims Processing

Along with outreach efforts it is important to plan for program changes to accommodate a higher workload while also improving case processing procedures, since it is an important goal for states to process all claims as quickly and accurately as possible, and to award emergency funds within a very short time. Although it is very difficult to reliably compare case processing statistics across states because of definitional and procedural differences, it seems clear that case processing time could be improved in many states. Obtaining verification from outside sources (such as service providers and law enforcement) is a key source of slowdowns, and some providers complain of the length of the process, benefit limitations, and releasing privileged information. Efforts are needed to streamline documentation procedures, address limitations, and resolve confidentiality issues. While nearly all states have expedited procedures for processing emergency claims, there is widespread agreement that local service providers are in a better position to provide emergency relief because they are not subject to eligibility and the concomitant verification requirements, and they can provide immediate access to local resources. Changes in who awards emergency funds (i.e., local service providers rather than state compensation programs) may necessitate changes in OVC guidelines and training of state and local personnel in new procedures.

Claims Processing Time. It is very important for claims to be processed in a timely manner to help victims avoid the adverse consequences of late payments of bills or failure to receive services in a timely manner. From the compensation program's perspective, processing time is also an important indicator of program efficiency. Data are available to assess claims processing efficiency, but several very important caveats must be kept in mind.

One very important fact to consider is that states vary greatly in how they calculate claim processing time. Forty-four percent of states "start the clock" when the application is first received in the compensation office, even if it lacks signatures, notarizations, or identifying information. In another 39 percent of states, the application must have all signatures, notarizations, and identifying information complete to start the clock, but the law enforcement report is not yet required. Of the remaining 16 percent of states, half require all the above

information plus the law enforcement report to consider the claim filed, and half require all the above plus all verifications. Obviously the more information states require to consider the claim filed and begin computing processing time, the lower the processing time is likely to be and the less likely claims will be determined ineligible for want of documentation.

Another variable in calculation of claim processing time and determination and approval rates is how states handle cases that are still missing important documentation after a reasonable period of time. Forty percent of the states administratively close incomplete claims, which puts an upper limit on case processing time and may increase determination rates while decreasing approval rates. Another 14 percent of the states stop the clock and suspend case processing pending further efforts by the victim to complete the claim, which may also lower official case processing time but decrease determination rates. Ten percent of the states keep the clock running, so that claims are never administratively closed or suspended, which is likely to produce very high case processing time statistics and lower determination rates. Finally, 35 percent of the states process the claim with the information they have, which would tend to keep case processing time down and increase determination rates, but decrease approval rates.

Bearing these warnings in mind, average case processing times reported by states range from 5 to 286 weeks. The mean is 29 weeks and the median is 18 weeks¹³. Even the median falls below the recommendation in *New Directions* that all claims are processed within 12 to 21 weeks (since it is a cross-state median of each state's average time, meaning many claims take longer than the average time). We asked state administrators to provide information on which claims processing tasks take the most time, in order to provide some insights on how processing time could be reduced.

Claims Verification. Obtaining verification from outside sources seems to take longer than internal processing of the claim, according to administrators' reports. Nearly half the administrators mentioned obtaining verification of losses from service providers or others (such as employers) as the most time-consuming step in claims processing by, and as the second most time-consuming step by another 29 percent. Nearly half the administrators reported that obtaining police verification of the crime was the first- or second-most time-consuming step, and over one-third of the states rated waiting for victims to provide application information as the first- or second-most time-consuming step. In contrast, less than one-quarter of the states reported waiting for collateral sources to make payments or internal processing steps (e.g., setting up the file, analyzing documentation, making eligibility decisions, determining the amount of the award, or waiting for the payment source to cut the check) as significantly time-consuming procedures.

Half the states have special verification procedures for different types of providers (funeral homes, medical providers, mental health providers, and attorneys), and a number of states report

¹³ The mean (or average) is the mathematical average of all case processing times and can be skewed by very large times. The median is the middle point, at which half the times fall below and half the times fall above.

that providers have complaints about these procedures. Some of these special requirements include treatment plans or notes, medical records, and insurance records. Providers commonly complain that payment is too low and takes too long, treatment limitations are too restrictive, and they resist releasing information protected by client privilege. This suggests that compensation programs and service providers should work together to resolve confidentiality issues (such as release of medical records), identify and address any inadequacies in payment caps and treatment limitations, and streamline documentation procedures so that compensation programs can function more efficiently and impose less burden on program staff and victims' service providers.

Emergency Claims. Sometimes crime victims need money right away to buy food, shelter, utilities, or urgent transportation services. Emergency situations advance to special status and handling in most (83 percent) states. These claims may get the immediate attention of the compensation staff, and checks may be delivered much faster, sometimes in only 24 hours. Compensation offices also lift documentation requirements for emergencies, allowing faxed summaries of the claim or other documentation in lieu of the originals. Sometimes verbal claims will suffice.

When asked if compensation programs are better suited than local victim service programs to handle emergency expenses, nearly all administrators (90 percent) said they were not. The most critical reasons for these answers are that in most states emergency items are not compensable under state statutes, and time-consuming verification requirements may prevent speedy responses in emergencies. Additionally, victims in regions of the state without immediate access to or from state compensation offices may be disadvantaged in emergency situations. The vast majority (89 percent) of administrators feel that emergency funds are best handled by local service providers, who can provide immediate access to local resources and are not hindered by eligibility requirements. Changes in who awards emergency funds (i.e., local service providers rather than state compensation programs) may necessitate changes in OVC guidelines prohibiting the use of VOCA assistance funds to reimburse victims for "economic loss, medical costs, or relocation expenses" (although "emergency financial assistance" is allowed). State and local personnel may also need to be trained in new procedures.

Claims Determinations

Claims are most often approved for payment, and approval rates tend to increase with increased program resources for victim assistance and verification. This underscores the need to have additional funds available for awards when enhancing administrative activities and improving program operations. Payment amounts, which are on the rise in many states, are typically well below caps. Funeral expense payments come closest to capped levels across states, indicating these caps may need to be raised in many states. Judgments of victims' contributory misconduct are a common reason for denials of claims, but processes and definitions for making these decisions show limited consensus across states. This is clearly an area in need of further development.

Consistency in Decision-Making. Claims determination procedures receive attention from many program administrators to ensure consistency in decision-making. Over half the state programs attempt to ensure consistency through staff meetings to discuss difficult decisions (e.g., contributory misconduct), using a checklist of eligibility issues, maintaining a reference source of approved and denied claims, and providing regular staff training. Nearly half the states use detailed claims processing manuals and quality control procedures, and about one-third use a checklist of payment considerations.

Approval Rates and Trends. The average claim approval rates (of determinations made) show remarkable consistency from 1996 to 1998, at a cross-state average of about 68 percent per year (ranging from 37 percent to 94 percent across states each year). Trends in approval rates over this time period vary a good deal across states, however. Thirty-one percent of the states showed increased approval rates from 1996 to 1998, 29 percent saw decreased rates, and approval rates in 39 percent of the states were stable over time. Those states with increased approval rates attributed the increases to a wide variety of improvements, including more compensation program resources to assist victims or obtain verifications, improved service provider assistance to claimants, changes in claims processing procedures, and broadened eligibility requirements or policies. Those states with decreasing approval rates reported that the major reasons for the declining rates had to do with other sources supplying benefits to victims, a rise in contributory misconduct rulings, and an increased level of marginal claims.

Payment Caps and Trends. All states have established different categories for compensation payments and caps on these categories. We asked about the categories for which claims were most likely to be paid out at the maximum level, as an indicator of which caps should be considered for raises. The findings indicate that the category which may be most in need of raising is funeral benefits, since these payments often come closest to capped levels.

As with approval rates, payment amounts have changed over the last several years (prior to the 1999 survey) in some states, and trends vary across states. In 39 percent of the states payment amounts have increased, in one-third amounts have decreased, and in 29 percent amounts have stayed about the same. Increasing payments were attributed to higher total and categorical caps, an expansion of eligible expenses, increasing costs for medical services, and, in a few states, expansions of who is eligible to file claims and a rising rate of (more expensive) violent crimes. Administrators experiencing decreasing payments were less certain of the reasons, but some cited decreasing payments for medical expenses, lowered caps, and a decrease in the more expensive violent crimes. A few pointed out that supplemental payments are not included in these figures, so that amounts may actually be higher than portrayed.

Denials. The most frequent single reason for non-payment was contributory misconduct, at an average of 28 percent of denials across states. However, non-compliance with program requirements, such as documentation and deadline requirements, law enforcement reporting and cooperation, and payor of last resort, resulted in denials in a total of 44 percent of cases on

average across the states. In addition, an average of 16 percent of claims were denied because the type of crime or the type of loss was not compensation-eligible.

Contributory Misconduct. This issue is clearly of primary importance in claims decision-making. It is a very difficult issue since decisions must often be made on a case-by-case basis in light of the unique facts of the case, and there seems to be a limited degree of consensus across states on what constitutes contributory misconduct. The key elements of contributory misconduct are whether the victim was engaged in illegal behavior at the time of the crime, and whether this illegal behavior was causally connected to the crime. When contributory misconduct is involved, claims may be denied or the amount of payment may be reduced proportional to the extent of the victim's culpability.

We asked administrators to report whether claims would be denied or reduced if it was determined that the victim was engaged in a felony, misdemeanor, gang activity, or prostitution at the time of the crime; if the victim was selling or possessing illegal drugs; if the victim was under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol; or if the victim was illegally carrying a weapon. We also asked whether these factors would constitute misconduct in most cases or only where a causal connection with the crime existed.

Virtually all states (from 88 percent up) considered all of these factors as key elements of contributory misconduct. The critical difference across states lies in whether the victim's behavior must be causally connected to the crime to provide grounds for denying or reducing the award.

The most clear-cut cases were when the victim was under the influence of alcohol or engaged in prostitution, behaviors that at least 80 percent of the states said must have a causal connection to the crime to constitute misconduct; and when the victim was selling illegal drugs, which 80 percent of the states would consider contributory even without a causal connection to the crime.

Some factors were more controversial but still showed a clear majority/minority split across states. About 60 percent of the states would assess contribution if the victim were under the influence of illegal drugs or illegally carrying a weapon, but only if causally connected to the crime, while about one-quarter of the states would assess contribution for these behaviors even if not causally connected. Similarly, a slight majority of the states (55 percent) would require a causal connection for the victim's possession of illegal drugs to constitute misconduct, while 38 percent would consider it misconduct without the causal connection. Sixty percent would assess contribution if the victim was engaged in a felony or misdemeanor even if not causally connected, but 35 percent would require a causal connection.

The most controversial situation is when the victim is engaged in gang activity at the time of the crime; 48 percent of the states require a causal connection for this to be considered

contributory misconduct, but 40 percent would consider it misconduct even without such a connection.

Clearly there is a limited degree of consensus on what constitutes contributory misconduct, and decisions must often be made case-by-case. Three-quarters of the states have a written policy or procedure in place to guide these decisions. The final decision in cases involving possible contributory misconduct is made by compensation program staff or administrators in about two-thirds of the states, and by the compensation board in the others.

Appeals. Nearly all states (85 percent) have a process whereby claimants can seek a reconsideration without filing a formal appeal. In an average of 18 percent of denied cases a request for reconsideration is filed; these requests lead to approvals in about one-third of the reconsiderations.

States also have formal appeals processes for claimants unhappy with the determination made in their case. Almost one-fourth of all claims denied or determined ineligible are appealed. Claims denied for contributory misconduct are by far the most likely to be appealed, underscoring again the importance of this aspect of decision-making. About one-quarter of appeals lead to reversals.

Underserved Populations

There is no way to positively identify how many eligible victims do not receive compensation or what groups (demographic groups or by type of crime) they represent. However, there is widespread agreement among administrators that many victims who may be eligible for compensation do not apply, and that these victims may represent some groups (such as victims of domestic violence, elder abuse, child abuse, and sexual assault; and victims in rural/remote areas, non-English speakers, ethnic/racial minorities, senior citizens, residents of Indian reservations, and gays) to a greater degree than others. It may be useful for compensation programs to focus future outreach efforts on working with agencies who represent these victim groups in order to identify ways to reach these groups and overcome obstacles to full participation. Under-utilization of compensation is often attributed to factors which can be addressed by the program, including lack of knowledge about compensation (indicating the need for more publicity and outreach efforts), fear of retaliation (suggesting that greater efforts to provide victim protection are needed), crime reporting requirements (which could perhaps be made less formidable), and paperwork fatigue (indicating a need to streamline application and verification procedures).

Parent, Auerbach, and Carlson (1992) estimated the numbers of unserved eligible crime victims by comparing program statistics with estimates of the number of eligible victims based on various factors. These factors include crime reporting statistics, estimates of the number of victimizations which were compensable types of crime with physical injury severe enough to require medical treatment, and with nonculpable and uninsured victims. Using several sets of assumptions, some more restrictive and some less, the authors suggested that anywhere from about one-quarter to one-half of eligible victims (depending on the assumptions made) are served

by compensation programs. While programs are clearly reaching many appropriate claimants, many still go unserved.

Administrators were questioned in our survey about whether there are underserved groups and who they think make up the underserved populations. Nearly every administrator (85 percent) felt that there are certain categories of victims who apply for compensation less frequently than expected based on victimization rates. Victims of domestic violence and elder abuse were listed as the leading underserved groups by about three-quarters of the administrators who reported any underserved populations. About half or more of the states also identified victims of child physical and sexual abuse (49 percent and 53 percent, respectively) and adult sexual assault (60 percent) as underserved populations. About one-third of the administrators thought adults molested as children, stalking victims, and victims of hate or bias crimes are underserved. Other categories, mentioned by only a handful of administrators, include victims of DUI/DWI crashes, survivors of homicide victims, and victims of robbery, assault, other violent crimes, terrorism, and gang violence. These reports suggest where future outreach efforts and efforts to make program requirements more user-friendly could be concentrated (e.g., work with groups that serve domestic violence victims to identify how victims can be reached and which requirements may pose obstacles for them).

The administrators attributed low application rates among these groups to a lack of knowledge about compensation (87 percent of administrators reporting underserved groups), embarrassment (67 percent), fear of retaliation by the offender (58 percent), and crime reporting requirements (53 percent). Other factors mentioned by at least one-quarter of the administrators included mistrust of authority (42 percent) and paperwork fatigue (27 percent). These perceptions clearly indicate that efforts are needed to increase service to underserved populations, such as greater publicity and victim protection.

We also asked administrators about underserved groups by victim characteristics; 65 percent of the administrators reported that they could identify underserved groups by victim demographics. The leading group under-utilizing compensation programs, in the opinion of administrators, is remote/rural residents (71 percent of these states). Administrators also frequently mentioned non-English speakers (62 percent), ethnic/racial minorities (47 percent), senior citizens (38 percent), residents of Indian reservations (35 percent), and gays (32 percent). Programs should consider working with groups who represent these constituents in order to identify how they can be reached and what obstacles program requirements may present.

Coordination

Coordination with victim assistance programs is important to build a seamless web of support services to meet victims' needs. VOCA assistance and compensation programs are administered from the same or closely linked offices in about half the states, which should enhance coordination efforts. States reported using several different coordination mechanisms, most notably staff training efforts, such as joint training

conferences and cross-training of staff. More collaborative efforts, such as providing input to each other's decision-making processes, are less often used.

In 12 states, the same agency houses both the compensation and VOCA assistance programs and one person administers both programs. In 13 states the programs are administered separately but both administrators report to the same board, cabinet secretary, or other supervisory person. These circumstances should enhance coordination efforts. In the remainder of the states, however, coordination may take more energy, time, and resources.

Compensation administrators reported an average of three to four different methods of coordinating with the VOCA assistance staff. The leading coordination mechanisms are training efforts, both joint training conferences for the compensation and assistance staffs (60 percent of states) and training of VOCA assistance sub-recipients by compensation staff or administrators (56 percent). Joint staff meetings; reviews by assistance staff of compensation forms, statutes, outreach activities, rules, and policies; regular meetings between compensation and assistance administrators; compensation input into selection of assistance subrecipients; and reciprocal cross-training are also used to effect coordination in one-quarter to one-third of the states.

Administrative Funds and Activities

Up to five percent of the funds annually allocated to a state may be used for a variety of important administrative activities. States are fairly evenly split as to whether they have used the entire allowance or not used it at all. Those who have not made full use of the allowance attribute this to the availability of administrative funds from other sources, and to the urgent need for awards to victims. Those who have accessed the administrative allowance are more likely to use these funds to support essential administrative activities, such as staffing, training, and office equipment, rather than more advanced efforts such as planning, needs assessments, the promotion of innovative approaches, or coordination. These findings indicate that any increase in the administrative allowance should be accompanied by an increase in overall allocations, to encourage advanced administrative activities (especially in those states which did not use the administrative allowance because the funds were more urgently needed for awards to victims). Technical assistance may be needed to help states explore new activities in productive ways.

From 1996 through 1998 (the years for which reasonably complete data were available), a little under half the states used the administrative allowance and somewhat over half did not. Those who used the allowance were most likely to use the full five percent, with only a few states using some but less than five percent. Of the states that have not always used the full allowance, over half gave as reasons the availability of administrative funds from other sources, and a more urgent need for awards to victims. Only five states cited burdensome OVC documentation requirements as a reason for non-use.

The administrators who have ever used any CVF funds for administration were asked to enumerate uses to which these funds have been directed, and to rate the usefulness of those expenditures. Half or more of the administrators used those funds to pay salary and benefits for

staff or consultant services in the financial or programmatic purposes of their programs; to attend OVC-sponsored or other technical assistance meetings; and to purchase office equipment. All or nearly all of these administrators felt that the use of the funds for these purposes was extremely beneficial.

Between one-quarter and half the administrators used administrative funds to print or develop publications, to purchase organization memberships and victim-related materials, to develop an automated claims processing or tracking system, and to provide training. The vast majority of administrators who expended funds for these purposes rated them as extremely useful.

Fewer than one-quarter of the states used federal administrative funds to develop strategic plans, conduct surveys or needs assessments, or promote innovative approaches; improve coordination efforts; promote systemic changes or coordination in how victims are served; offer a toll-free number; pay audit or indirect costs; obtain equipment to facilitate services to the disabled; or pay experts to review claims.

Training

Training for members of the justice community, victim assistance providers, and a wide range of institutions and individuals likely to be in contact with victims is an important part of a well-functioning victim compensation system. Training educates providers about the program so that they can inform victims of it and help victims with the application process. The survey findings indicate that compensation programs often provide training to a fairly broad range of professionals who work with victims. Those who may work most closely with victims -- law enforcement, prosecutors, and staff of both public-based and private victim service agencies, especially those who work with victims of domestic violence and sexual assault -- are quite likely to receive training. While these efforts are very important, other types of professionals who work with victims, such as health and mental health care providers, funeral directors, school personnel, and representatives of Indian tribes and other ethnic or racial minorities, should also be better represented in training activities, in order to reach additional victims.

Nearly all (92 percent) of the compensation administrators reported activities to train direct service providers in 1999. As might be expected, these states most often trained criminal justice and victim services professionals. The states most frequently provided training to personnel from law enforcement (in 96 percent of the states that provided training), domestic violence coalitions or local service providers (92 percent), state or local prosecutor-based victim/witness staff (90 percent), state sexual assault coalitions or local service providers (83 percent), and state or local police-based victim/witness staff (79 percent). Other members of criminal justice and victim services professions who were trained in at least half the states include prosecutors (71 percent of the states), probation/parole staff (56 percent), survivors of homicide representatives (56 percent), state or local protective service agencies (54 percent), MADD representatives (52 percent), and federal victim/witness coordinators (52 percent). Criminal justice professionals

less likely to be involved in training include judges (trained in only 31 percent of states), corrections personnel (38 percent), and state criminal justice planning organizations (25 percent).

Other allied professionals receive training but at lower rates. Among them, health care providers and mental health care providers participate most often (in 63 percent and 52 percent of the programs reporting training, respectively). Funeral directors, victims/survivors, Indian tribal representatives, school personnel, representatives of other ethnic and minority groups, and attorneys received training in at least one-quarter of the states that provided any.

Compensation program staff also need to be familiar with issues of victimization to better serve the victims they come into contact with and to have an informed perspective while making important claims processing decisions. Nearly all the states (85 percent) reported providing training to compensation staff that addresses victimization issues. Compensation staff in nearly all these states received training through conferences; other frequent training methods are in-house staff training and training provided by victim service agencies.

Program Databases

Administrators described program databases that support evaluation efforts, one of the recommendations found in New Directions. Most states maintain records of the basic client demographic and case processing statistics, such as the dates claims were filed and awarded or denied, and reasons for denials. Program evaluation would, in most states, require special efforts to develop a substantial amount of additional data on process and outcomes.

Administrators' Recommendations

Administrators suggested a number of useful changes for the compensation program, including expanding coverage to additional types of losses, raising payment caps, and making additional efforts to reach and serve underserved populations. They also suggested improvements to their states' VOCA assistance program as well, such as better training of subrecipients on compensation issues and changes in subgrant award processes and patterns.

When administrators were asked for recommendations concerning changes they would like to see in their state's compensation program, over one-half suggested expanding coverage for additional types of losses including compensation for secondary victims, assistance in relocation, crime scene cleanup¹⁴, and travel expenses of victims. Nearly half the program administrators felt they should put more emphasis on underserved victim groups, such as non-English speaking populations, the elderly, children, and victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. One-third of the states would like to expand outreach to victims from diverse cultural groups, victims in rural areas, and victims of elder abuse. Nearly half also wanted to raise payment caps. A fair number also noted the need for additional staff members and for increased coordination with the assistance program.

¹⁴ Although this is an allowable expense under federal guidelines, some states may not pay it.

We also asked compensation administrators what changes they would like to see made in their state's assistance program. About half of them felt that there should be consistent performance standards, funds should be distributed "more equitably" (less for domestic violence and sexual assault), a statewide review team should review how funds are spent, or compensation training should be mandatory for assistance subrecipients. One-quarter to one-third also felt that the VOCA administrator should monitor subrecipients to ensure compliance with compensation assistance mandates; ensure training on compensation is provided to subrecipients; and to ensure that compensation administrators are involved in assistance subrecipient funding decisions.

IN-DEPTH ANALYSES OF COMPENSATION PROGRAMS IN SIX STATES

This section of the compensation chapter builds on the findings from the national survey of state compensation administrators with detailed information from site visits to six states, in which we interviewed state program administrators and staff, members of program oversight bodies, victim advocates, and victim service providers. The six sites – California, Idaho, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Vermont, and Wisconsin – were selected in a meeting of the evaluation team, the evaluation's advisory panelists, and NIJ and OVC staff. The overarching goal was to choose a set of states that would represent the nation in general, by obtaining diversity on a variety of factors. We selected states in various regions of the nation; states that include large urban areas as well as states that are primarily rural; large, densely populated states as well as states that are smaller and more sparsely populated; and states whose populations represent a broad range of demographics.

As detailed in the state profiles presented on the following pages, these six programs also provide variety in the type of agency administering the compensation program; the degree of co-location with the VOCA assistance program; state funding sources and the size of the federal grants; program requirements; and various program performance indicators such as payments made. These data were compiled from statistics reported to OVC by the states (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/fund/sbsmap) and from NACVCB's Program Directory (2002).

Site visits were conducted in two phases: the first was from February, 2000 to July, 2000, and the second was from October, 2000 to July, 2001. In the first phase we spoke with program administrators,^{15,16} program staff, members of the programs' oversight bodies, and state-level victim advocates.¹⁷ In the second phase of site visits we met with three direct service providers in each state, all funded by VOCA assistance grants and therefore all required to assist their clients with victim compensation. The providers included law enforcement-, prosecutor-, and court-based programs, as well as non-profit agencies such as domestic violence programs, rape crisis centers, programs for victims of child abuse, Mothers Against Drunk Driving programs,

¹⁵ In two states, the administrator was recently appointed and the responses reflect what she thought had been done in the past as well her plans to change operating procedures. In both cases, too little time has passed to make a judgment about whether changes have been instituted and to what effect.

¹⁶ As the majority of program administrators are female, the pronouns "she" and "her" are used in this report to refer to them.

¹⁷ Structured Interview Guidelines used in the first site visits can be found in Appendix B.

programs for homicide survivors and for elderly victims, programs for Native Americans and for Spanish-speaking victims, and other victim service organizations.¹⁸ We also conducted focus groups with clients of five of these programs; compensation was one topic of group discussion.

After the state profiles, we present our general conclusions and recommendations from the site visits. The specific areas we analyzed are then presented individually with a “Trends and Recommendations” section at the end of each.

State Program Profiles

California Compensation Program in FY 2001	
Administrative Agency	Victims of Crime Program, Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board
Co-Location with VOCA Victim Assistance Program	These funds are administered in a separate executive agency
<i>Funding:</i>	
State Funding Sources	Offender fees
2002 VOCA Grant	\$23,305,000
<i>Program Requirements:</i>	
Law Enforcement Reporting Period	No set limit, but must be reported timely
Filing Period	Adults, 1 year; Children until age 19
Payment Cap	\$70,000 as of January 1, 2001
<i>Performance Indicators:</i>	
Number and Amount of Claims Paid	N=43,158; sum=\$94,553,541; mean=\$2,191
Payments by Crime Type	Assault: 44% Homicide: 16% Sexual assault: 4% Child abuse: 23% DUI/DWI: 2% Robbery: 4% Other: 6%
Payments by Type of Expense	Medical/dental: 37% Mental health: 41% Economic support: 13% Funeral/burial: 9% Crime scene clean-up: 0% Other: 1%
Additional Compensable Costs (Besides VOCA-Specified)	Moving expenses; Rehabilitation; Attorney fees; Emergency awards
Domestic Violence Claims Paid	23% of total claims paid
Percent Paid for Forensic Sexual Assault Exams	\$0 paid

¹⁸ Structured Interview Guidelines used in the second site visits can be found in Appendix C. Focus group guidelines are presented in Appendix D.

Idaho Compensation Program in FY 2001	
Administrative Agency	Crime Victims Compensation Program, Idaho Industrial Commission
Co-Location with VOCA Victim Assistance Program	These funds are administered in a separate executive agency
<i>Funding:</i>	
State Funding Sources	Offender fees
2002 VOCA Grant	\$345,000
<i>Program Requirements:</i>	
Law Enforcement Reporting Period	72 hours
Filing Period	1 year - exceptions: good-cause exception construed liberally, especially in cases involving minors, domestic violence, sexual assault or abuse
Payment Cap	\$25,000
<i>Performance Indicators:</i>	
Number and Amount of Claims Paid	N=921; sum=\$1,604,320; mean=\$1,742
Payzents by CrimeType	Assault: 58% Homicide: 10% Sexual assault: 4% Child abuse: 10% DUI/DWI: 12% Robbery: 0% Other: 7%
Payments by Type of Expense	Medical/dental: 66% Mental health: 17% Economic support: 14% Funeral/burial: 3% Crime scene clean-up: 0% Other: 0%
Additional Compensable Costs (Besides VOCA-Specified)	Replacement Services; Travel; Rehabilitation; Attorney fees; Emergency Awards
Domestic Violence Claims Paid	16% of total claims paid
Percent Paid for Forensic Sexual Assault Exams	\$0 paid

Pennsylvania Compensation Program in FY 2001	
Administrative Agency	Victims Compensation Division, Bureau of Victim Services, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency
Co-Location with VOCA Victim Assistance Program	These funds are administered by another division within the Bureau of Victim Services
Funding:	
State Funding Sources	Conviction fees
2002 VOCA Grant	\$1,833,000
Program Requirements:	
Law Enforcement Reporting Period	72 hours
Filing Period	1 year - exceptions: good cause waiver can extend filing period 1 year; in cases of child abuse, extension may be up to 5 years from date of last incident, providing victim was under 18 and offender was a parent, paramour of parent, residing in household, or responsible for victim's welfare.
Payment Cap	\$35,000
Performance Indicators:	
Number and Amount of Claims Paid	N=2,301; sum=\$8,222,011; mean=\$3,573
Payments by Crime Type	Assault: 66% Homicide: 17% Sexual assault: 1% Child abuse: 2% DUI/DWI: 8% Robbery: 0% Other: 6%
Payments by Type of Expense	Medical/dental: 46% Mental health: 3% Economic support: 28% Funeral/burial: 11% Crime scene clean-up: 0% Other: 11%
Additional Compensable Costs (Besides VOCA-Specified)	Replacement Services; Travel; Rehabilitation; Replacement of Stolen Cash Benefits; Attorney fees; Emergency
Domestic Violence Claims Paid	5% of total claims paid
Percent Paid for Forensic Sexual Assault Exams	2% of total amount paid

South Carolina Compensation Program in FY 2001	
Administrative Agency	State Office of Victim Assistance, Office of the Governor
Co-Location with VOCA Victim Assistance Program	These funds are administered in a separate executive agency
<i>Funding:</i>	
State Funding Sources	Offender fees, fines, and assessments
2002 VOCA Grant	\$2,443,000
<i>Program Requirements:</i>	
Law Enforcement Reporting Period	48 hours
Filing Period	180 days - exceptions: for good cause, applicants may file up to 4 years from the crime or the date of its discovery
Payment Cap	\$25,000
<i>Performance Indicators:</i>	
Number and Amount of Claims Paid	N=3,046; sum=\$7,654,926; mean=\$2,481
Payments by Crime Type	Assault: 68% Homicide: 12% Sexual assault: 2% Child abuse: 5% DUI/DWI: 3% Robbery: 3% Other: 7
Payments by Type of Expense	Medical/dental: 60% Mental health: 7% Economic support: 17% Funeral/burial: 11% Crime scene clean-up: 0% Other: 0%
Additional Compensable Costs (Besides VOCA-Specified)	Travel; Rehabilitation; Attorney fees; Emergency
Domestic Violence Claims Paid	11% of total claims paid
Percent Paid for Forensic Sexual Assault Exams	5% of total amount paid

Vermont Compensation Program in FY 2001	
Administrative Agency	Victim Compensation Program, Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services
Co-Location with VOCA Victim Assistance Program	The Center also administers these funds
<i>Funding:</i>	
State Funding Sources	Surcharges on criminal convictions
2002 VOCA Grant	\$120,000
<i>Program Requirements:</i>	
Law Enforcement Reporting Period	No set period
Filing Period	No set period
Payment Cap	\$10,000
<i>Performance Indicators:</i>	
Number and Amount of Claims Paid	N=544; sum=\$575,843; mean=\$1059
Payments by Crime Type	Assault: 35% Homicide: 23% Sexual assault: 6% Child abuse: 19% DUI/DWI: 2% Robbery: 0% Other: 15%
Payments by Type of Expense	Medical/dental: 20% Mental health: 24% Economic support: 13% Funeral/burial: 24% Crime scene clean-up: 1% Other: 11%
Additional Compensable Costs (Besides VOCA-Specified)	Moving Expenses; Replacement Services; Travel; Rehabilitation; Attorney Fees; Emergency
Domestic Violence Claims Paid	31% of total claims paid
Percent Paid for Forensic Sexual Assault Exams	6% of total amount paid

Wisconsin Compensation Program in FY 2001	
Administrative Agency	Office of Crime Victim Services, Department of Justice
Co-Location with VOCA Victim Assistance Program	The Office also administers these funds
<i>Funding:</i>	
State Funding Sources	Appropriations
2002 VOCA Grant	\$556,000
<i>Program Requirements:</i>	
Law Enforcement Reporting Period	5 days – Exceptions: For child victims, reporting deadline from disclosure, or 18 th birthday if adult fails to report in victim's behalf within 5 days of disclosure. Report deadline may be extended up to 30 days for adults, with additional waiver possible.
Filing Period	1 year
Payment Cap	\$42,000
<i>Performance Indicators:</i>	
Number and Amount of Claims Paid	N=1,237; sum=\$2,507,350; mean=\$2,027
Payments by Crime Type	Assault: 50% Homicide: 14% Sexual assault: 5% Child abuse: 5% DUI/DWI: 2% Robbery: 4% Other: 21%
Payments by Type of Expense	Medical/dental: 57% Mental health: 6% Economic support: 29% Funeral/burial: 6% Crime scene clean-up: 0% Other: 1%
Additional Compensable Costs (Besides VOCA-Specified)	Replacement Services; Attorney fees; Emergency
Domestic Violence Claims Paid	7% of total claims paid
Percent Paid for Forensic Sexual Assault Exams	1% of total amount paid

Conclusions and Recommendations

Our discussions with compensation program administrators and staff, members of oversight bodies, victim advocacy groups and direct service providers, and focus groups with victims, highlighted a number of important trends and challenges for the future.

The clearest theme that emerged from our work is that compensation programs are altering their policies, practices, requirements, and legislation to allow a more victim-friendly service philosophy. Programs are looking for ways in which they can make the process more useable to victims, serve more victims, and meet victims' financial needs more completely. With the federal payout to state programs set to increase by 50 percent in federal fiscal year 2003, increasing benefits to victims may become even more feasible since more funds should be available. Because the federal formula is a percentage of state expenditures, growing the program is a perpetuating cycle: the more funds that are spent, the more come in.¹⁹ Increasing benefits to unserved and underserved victims will therefore also help programs to grow, as long as it is done in a careful, measured fashion.

Our work uncovered a number of keys to promoting a victim-service orientation and responsible program growth:

- *Strong, victim-oriented leadership.* A leader with a strong victim service orientation sets norms for proactive, conscientious work habits in staff. In-house advocates can provide helpful services to claimants, help smooth the claim process, and serve as a living symbol of the program's commitment to serving victims.
- *Close coordination with victim assistance grant administrators and direct service providers in communities.* The goal is to provide a seamless web of support for victims. Coordination should go beyond communication to include coordination of policies and funding decisions; providing ongoing training and resource materials to direct service providers, to improve their ability to pre-screen and refer victims to compensation and provide assistance with the claims process (e.g., help claimants fill out forms, assist programs in obtaining verifications); joint staff meetings and participation in cross-training activities; and monitoring referrals from direct service providers to identify any areas needing further attention.
- *Other administrative activities such as strategic planning, long-term financial planning, use of technology such as automated case management, and compensation program staff training.* Support for administrative activities is not as plentiful as could be desired, and there are sometimes obstacles to using even those funds that are available. Programs need to maximize administrative support so they can undertake these essential activities, and so they can maintain adequate staffing levels.

¹⁹ Up to a certain limit, but federal allocations for compensation are currently well below that limit.

- *Tools to help staff process claims more efficiently, such as operational manuals, checklists, and decision-making guidelines (on contributory misconduct, for example).* While providing guidance based on general principles, these tools should also allow the flexibility needed to respond to the unique circumstances of each case.
- *Relaxing or expanding eligibility criteria to serve more victims and meet victims' needs more completely.* Compensation programs are liberalizing requirements around reporting to and cooperating with law enforcement for some classes of victims, and claim filing deadlines are being extended or abolished. Programs are also expanding concepts of eligible crimes (to include some expenses associated with property crimes), eligible victims (to serve additional types of secondary victims), compensable expenses (moving expenses and financial counseling to name a few of many examples), and are raising payment caps. Payor of last resort requirements can be relaxed or streamlined for some victims, and innovative thinking about contributory misconduct is emerging in certain applications (such as homicide survivors). As criteria and requirements evolve, it will be very important for programs to monitor whether these are successful strategies for reaching additional victims or serving additional needs, whether program resources can respond to increased demand, and whether claims can be processed efficiently and determined in a fair manner under liberalized requirements. Any problems in any of these areas would need to be identified and addressed if programs are to meet their goals of serving victims better while maintaining efficient operations and financial stability.
- *Appeals procedures that are friendly to claimants.* This includes adequate time allowance for claimants to file appeals; support for claimants during the appeals process; allowing claimants to take an active role if they wish and facilitating their access to hearings; making decisions quickly; and getting feedback from appellants to improve the experience for future appellants.
- *Attention to the needs and experiences of underserved populations.* States should continue to examine which victim groups are relatively less likely to access compensation and why. When program requirements or procedures present barriers, they should be modified as necessary and insofar as possible. When lack of knowledge about compensation is the barrier, compensation programs should strive to reach out to those who have direct contact with these victims (traditional victim service providers and anyone else who contacts victims, including schools, advocacy organization for minority groups, social services, and so on), to educate them about compensation, provide them with resources to use in their work with victims, and establish lines of communication. Compensation programs will also be better-positioned to reach underserved populations if they have the necessary language resources and understanding of cultural diversity issues.

Program Mission

Compensation programs disburse public funds from criminal fines, and sometimes appropriations, to crime victims or those who apply on their behalf, and to those who provide services to victims (such as medical and dental providers, mental health providers, funeral homes, and so on). Programs have a dual mission to protect public funds from fraud and abuse, and to operate within limits set by laws and program policies, while striving to meet the needs of crime victims. Where programs strike the balance between careful management of public funds and serving clients as fully as possible may have ripple effects throughout the program's operation. The program's conception of its mission may be reflected in how strictly or flexibly its policies are interpreted in practice, how the program views its role in procedural matters such as verifying claims, and how proactively the program approaches functions such as reaching out to claim referral sources and providing referrals and other assistance to claimants.

Anecdotal reports indicate that, in the past, some programs may have functioned like some private insurance companies, placing the greatest emphasis on limiting disbursements in order to preserve program funds. Programs using this approach may have been unlikely to provide active assistance to claimants with the claims process; may have interpreted policies limiting eligibility conditions rather strictly; and may not have been much concerned with training those who refer victims to compensation or providing assistance to claimants.

More recent years have seen changes in the way programs approach their mission. There has been a call from compensation programs, victim advocates, and victim service providers to place greater emphasis on viewing claimants as clients and viewing the program's goal as providing strong client services. A victim service orientation can be reflected in efforts to cultivate claims, help claimants with the process, and interpret policies more flexibly to allow payments to be made whenever possible. The changing emphasis in the direction of greater responsiveness to clients can be seen throughout the policy and program administration issues discussed in this report.

This view of programmatic mission, while laudable to many in the field, is not without challenges to program administrators. Effective financial management is still important; programs cannot "give away the store" or there will be no funds left for future claimants. And, of course, it is still critical to guard against fraudulent claims, so that funds will be preserved for legitimate claimants. Issues around how a victim service orientation is manifested in program policies and practices, the challenges presented to programs, and how programs are responding to these challenges form a recurring theme of our findings and recommendations.

Program Management

We examined various aspects of program management, including administrative location, co-location with assistance programs, financial planning, administrative activities and funding for those activities, and training. We present an analysis of what we learned about these aspects

of program management, and approaches that best help compensation programs meet the goal of serving victims efficiently and as comprehensively as possibly.

Program Placement

Compensation programs are placed within a variety of state agencies with different missions and networks with other state, local, and private sector organizations. We explored the implications of administrative placement on the programs' definition of their mission and their ability to meet their mission.

A program's administrative location can be determined by various forces. Often the state legislation authorizing the program specified its location. The governor makes the decision in other cases. While political considerations might dictate program placement, numerous other factors could also affect the decision. Program placement might reflect a philosophical orientation; for example, placement in a social welfare department to fulfill a humanitarian duty to crime victims, or placement in a department of public safety as an extension of the state's duty to protect its citizens from crime. Placement may result from pragmatic decisions; for example, to utilize existing staff trained in claims determination, such as worker's compensation boards, or to facilitate access to information by placing the program within the criminal justice system. Recently, new agencies have been created specifically to administer the funds available for crime victims.

The programs we selected for site visits are generally representative of the types of state agencies that administer victim compensation nationwide. Two programs are within offices directly involved with the criminal justice system – the Wisconsin Department of Justice and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. One is in the Office of the Governor (South Carolina); one is in an independent agency dedicated to victim issues (Vermont); one is in an Industrial Commission that also administers Worker's Compensation (Idaho); and one is in an Executive Branch finance department (California's Victims' Compensation and Government Claims Board).

In *New Directions*, OVC (1998) identifies several compensation recommendations from the field that call for a more victim-centered approach to program management, such as including victims on advisory boards and adding victim advocates to the program staff.²⁰ We expected to find that program placement could affect how claimants are treated during the claims process and whether victim advocacy was institutionalized within the program, to the extent that agency missions differ.

We found that program placement was actually less important to a victim-centered orientation than expected. The real key to a responsive and accessible compensation program was good leadership. An administrator with a victim-friendly attitude and experience in victim services could succeed in changing the viewpoint of a program, regardless of where it is housed

or its historical perspective. A compensation administrator committed to improving a program's delivery of service to victims can be a role model for her staff.

Conversely, even if a program is housed in an independent agency or service-oriented office and required by legislation to include strong victim-support functions, it can fail in its mission without strong and committed leadership. In one case an independent compensation program in a prior administration was described as "suspicious of claimants and ideological." Although this program's staff and policies have changed, it is possible that progressive compensation administrators could be replaced in the future, just as they took the place of less victim-oriented predecessors. Many compensation administrators, including several that we interviewed, are political appointees and reflect the views of the current governor or attorney general on victim issues.

Changes in Program Location

Compensation programs, including several of our sites, have occasionally been transferred among state agencies; for example, from the Office of the Attorney General to independent agencies, from independent agencies to the Governor's office or a criminal justice agency, from human service bureaus to court systems, and so on. Crime victim programs are attractive to many state agencies; they are politically popular and distribute a large amount of money, particularly when combined with VOCA and other victim assistance grants programs. In our 1999 national survey of compensation administrators, we found that 67 percent of compensation programs had revenues exceeding their immediate payout needs. One administrator reported "deliberately staying out of the news and not publicizing the amount of money available to spend." Fear of funding raids by other departments is common. We also heard about turf battles and other state agencies that wanted to take over compensation programs.

State politics was a prime concern for several administrators; some thought that elevating the program to a cabinet-level position would facilitate efforts to get more funding and would increase their influence on the legislative process. Others wanted to remain independent of the political process; they felt a need for just the resources, staff, and discretion to get the job done.

Coordination with VOCA Assistance Grant Programs

Coordination between compensation programs and victim assistance grants programs is necessary to deliver a seamless web of support services for victims' needs. According to both OVC (1998) and the NACVCB (1998), coordination should move beyond communication and toward active collaboration. In *New Directions*, OVC recommends coordination to improve outreach and public awareness about compensation, to improve the compensation program's understanding of victims' needs, and to increase the range of services available to victims. The programs themselves have developed recommended strategies for improved coordination. These include strategies to assist claimants, such as training VOCA assistance subgrantees about

²⁰ *New Directions, Compensation Recommendations from the Field # 8 and 10.*

compensation requirements, placing a VOCA-funded victim advocate in the compensation office to assist claimants, and sending brochures and application forms to all VOCA assistance subgrantees based on a list provided to the compensation office by the VOCA assistance administrator. Recommended coordination strategies for policy development include asking compensation directors to participate in the VOCA assistance grant review process, inviting VOCA assistance administrators and subgrantees to review compensation statutes and policies, and working together to identify underserved populations and develop outreach plans.

Three of the programs we studied in depth are located in the same agency that administers the VOCA grants program for direct victim services (Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Wisconsin). The other three are entirely separate from the VOCA assistance grants administration. Two of these are in government departments primarily concerned with financial issues, rather than victim assistance (California and Idaho), while the other is part of an executive office that includes many constituency services, including victim assistance (South Carolina).

We expected to find extensive coordination and cross-training between the compensation and assistance programs in states with a close degree of co-location, as well as improved communication between the compensation programs and local victim advocates/providers. In the remainder of the site visit states, where there was no co-location, we expected that coordination would take more energy, time, and resources.

The three co-located programs had a distinct coordination advantage from the logistical standpoint. Some shared office space. Some held regular joint staff meetings and all reported informal daily communications. The administrators felt that co-locating the programs saved administrative costs and improved efficiency. All of the co-located programs were housed in offices dedicated to victim services, including administration of at least some other state or federal victim funding programs. Their advisory boards were either identical or there was substantial cross-membership on separate advisory boards.

The three programs that were not co-located operated completely separately from the VOCA assistance grants offices and had different advisory boards. They were not required by statute to include the VOCA assistance grant administrator on their boards and vice versa, although in one case a representative of the VOCA grants office was on the compensation program board. The states with separate programs had no fixed procedures for coordination or regular policy input, although one state did report a major effort in the past to include the VOCA assistance grants office and service providers in strategic planning for the compensation program. The most common type of coordination reported was training given by compensation programs to VOCA assistance subgrantees. Claims staff looked forward to National Crime Victim Rights Week and other statewide events/conferences as opportunities to talk with direct service providers. Whether or not they were allowed/encouraged to attend depended on the attitude of the administrator and her willingness to spend training/administrative money.

The co-located compensation programs seemed to be particularly knowledgeable about victim issues and more familiar with the full range of services available for victims from all funding sources. We looked for ways that this knowledge might be important for making policy and funding decisions, outreach to victims, and monitoring direct service providers for compliance with compensation referral requirements.

Policy and Funding. OVC has recommended that compensation programs work together with other state programs that provide funding for victim services to ensure that victims' needs are met comprehensively and that there are no gaps in service. Many victims' needs can be met either by compensation, which reimburses victims and paid providers, or by a direct service provided free of charge by a provider funded by VOCA or other victim assistance grants. For example, mental health services can be provided to crime victims by VOCA-funded non-profit counseling agencies or by counselors who charge for their services and receive reimbursement from the compensation program. Similarly, some emergency services – e.g., food, shelter, transportation, repairs to broken locks or windows – can be paid for through the compensation program or provided free-of-charge by a direct service provider. An administrator or board overseeing both compensation and assistance grants programs would be well-positioned to make policy choices about how victims' needs could best be addressed. Theoretically, co-located programs could most readily avoid duplication of services while maximizing resources.

One co-located program reported making funding decisions that carefully leverage compensation and assistance funds. VOCA assistance grant money is reserved for direct services that a provider cannot bill compensation for, such as hot lines, emergency shelter, victim advocacy, support groups, crisis response, and so on. The VOCA grants office will not fund victim assistance proposals for services that are eligible for reimbursement through compensation. For example, most mental health counseling in this state is reimbursed through compensation. Community mental health services are widely available for a fee. They are highly regarded and victims are encouraged to call a state mental health office for a referral to a trained therapist. The compensation program has published a mental health policy for compensation claims that explains fee schedules, the need for treatment plans, types of expenses that are reimbursable, and eligible providers. The compensation payouts are generous and the documentation requirements are not too onerous, according to direct service providers in this state.

Using compensation for mental health needs in this state appears to be a rational effort to maximize limited resources.²¹ However, this policy could present obstacles to some victims. Compensation eligibility rules require victims to report the crime to law enforcement. However, some victims, such as domestic violence and sexual assault victims, may be reluctant to

²¹ It could also be an effort to increase VOCA funding. The VOCA assistance money is determined by the population of the state; a sparsely populated state receives minimal amounts of assistance dollars. The federal compensation allocation increases in value as long as the amount of state funds spent on compensation is going up.

participate with the criminal justice system. These victims might not be eligible for reimbursement from compensation for the costs of mental health counseling. On the other hand, shelters, crisis centers, and other VOCA-funded direct victim services are available to all victims, whether or not they report to the police. Trained counseling staff housed within these not-for-profit agencies could provide services to all victims. The program considered this option but believes that it is better to provide mental health services through compensation reimbursement rather than as a free direct service, because “you couldn’t pay counselors enough in the shelter system to attract competent people.” Obviously, programs must weigh eligibility requirements with other factors unique to the state’s service delivery system when making these types of judgments. Co-location of the compensation and assistance programs could be a definite advantage for this deliberation process.

Outreach. Victims receiving free services from nonprofit providers and from law enforcement or other criminal justice system advocates may also have reimbursable needs, such as medical expenses and lost wages. In order to ensure a seamless web of services, all VOCA-funded direct service programs are required, as a condition of their grant, to inform their clients about the availability of victim compensation. This is a key requirement from the compensation administrator’s perspective, since direct service programs contact many victims and can be a major source of referrals. However, direct service providers must be informed about compensation and have access to compensation materials in order to fulfill this requirement. Compensation programs are obviously in the best position to provide this information and materials. When asked about outreach efforts in our earlier survey, at least three-quarters of the state compensation administrators responded that they attempt to reach clients through brochures distributed by victim service agencies and by training these agencies about the compensation program. Such an outreach strategy is recommended by OVC (1998) because, “[u]ltimately, it is the responsibility of every person who assists victims on the frontline to inform them that they may be eligible for compensation.”

While outreach will be covered in detail in a later section of this report, we note it here because we expected co-located programs to provide more training about compensation to direct service providers. We found, however, that co-located programs were no better or worse than other programs in providing training to service providers, in our sample of six states. One co-located program has in recent years undertaken an extensive training campaign with dedicated staff in a new internal division specifically for training. Another co-located program, however, reported no real training efforts to get service providers to understand and help their clients with applications. In this state, there were no standard protocols being used by service providers to determine the compensation needs of their clients. Hotline workers were not well-trained about compensation and shelters and crisis centers did not always think about the long-term expensive counseling needs of clients.

Thus, providing more services through the compensation arm of the program would be a valid way to increase federal compensation grants to the state, and would not impact the assistance allocation.

Monitoring Service Providers for Referrals. Actively monitoring whether service providers comply with the compensation referral conditions of their VOCA assistance grant could also increase referrals. Co-location of programs could facilitate this monitoring. However, we found that co-location certainly does not guarantee effective monitoring, nor is it necessary for it. In one state where the compensation and assistance programs are completely separate, the compensation administrator was asked to speak at an annual VOCA subgrantee meeting, to explain compensation procedures. In this state, the VOCA assistance administrator actively monitors subgrantees for compliance with their VOCA requirement to assist victims with compensation applications. In addition to monitoring and training, some administrators had suggestions for easy-to-implement reforms. For example, including a checkbox -- “notified about comp” -- on a provider’s intake form was seen as a major impetus for increased referrals.

Financial Planning

Regardless of where they are located within a state’s governing structure, all victim compensation programs are funded from two primary sources. First, they receive state funding from fees or charges that offenders pay, from state appropriations, or from a combination of the two. Second, they receive a federal VOCA grant based on a 40 percent payout, i.e., for every \$100 of state funds awarded to victims, the states receive \$40 in federal VOCA funds. This 40 percent payout has increased since VOCA was passed in 1984, and will increase again to 60 percent in FY 2003, under the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001. As illustrated in figure 1, the increase in VOCA grants for compensation has been relatively modest and steady since 1986. The phenomenal growth in the Crime Victims Fund in the last few years has had relatively little impact on compensation allocations to the states, compared to the dramatic increases in state grants for victim assistance (i.e. direct service) programs. The trend in federal compensation allocations should see a significant jump in 2003 when the federal payout formula increases by 50 percent.

Since 1997, OVC guidelines have allowed states a four-year obligation period for federal allocations – the year of the award plus the following three years. Our national survey of state administrators found that most states do carry forward funds from year to year. De-obligation amounts are negligible, indicating that states are able to obligate the funds within the four-year period. The administrators we spoke with in our site visits reported that while accounting procedures may be somewhat complicated by the extended obligation period, it is useful to have that period of time to plan for honoring long-term commitments and anticipated increases in demands in the future.

While many of the states currently have adequate, or even surplus, funding, many see a difficult situation down the road. Program administrators recognize the potential conflict between financial stability and the substantial increase in services for claimants recommended by OVC, both in *New Directions* and the 2001 Final Program Guidelines (including some types of coverage for some property crimes, and new benefits for victims of violent crimes). If programs implement the new outreach recommendations, add new benefits, increase caps for current

benefits, and ease the reporting and other requirements imposed on applicants, they could significantly increase the number of applications they receive each year. In fact, several of our site visit states reported an enormous increase in applications in the last couple of years as a result of better outreach, public education about compensation, and more efficient case processing. One has moved from a surplus funds position to an immediate need for additional money.

The increased federal funding slated for FY 2003 will certainly help states respond to increased demand for compensation funds resulting from expansion of benefits and improved outreach. To take FY 2000 allocations as an example, the median federal award across the states was \$621,000, based on the 40 percent payout formula. When the payout formula increases by 50 percent in 2003 (to 60 percent), the median federal awards should increase to a median of about \$930,000 per state (probably a bit more, since state payouts tend to rise somewhat from year to year). Of the approximately \$310,000 median increase per state, at least 95 percent will be spent on direct payments since the administrative allowance remains at five percent and is not always fully used. The dollar amount of administrative funds available to states will increase because the federal payout will increase, but the administrative allowance as a percentage of the total award will not increase. Thus states will have more funds to award without a proportionate increase in the administrative activities.

Administrative Activities and Funding

We found that compensation programs are generally anxious to efficiently deliver useful services, but many are hampered by outdated computer systems, poorly trained staff, and insufficient administrative support. Under VOCA, states may use up to five percent of their federal allocation for a variety of administrative tasks that could significantly improve the delivery of compensation services. Allowable administrative costs include essential activities such as staffing, training, and office equipment. More advanced activities such as training of victim service providers, development of protocols for improved cooperation with assistance agencies, public information materials, and development of strategic and financial plans, are also allowed. All of these activities, and more, are recommended by OVC in *New Directions*.

The site visit states reflected the national split between states that never used the administrative allowance and those taking full advantage of the allowance for both essential and advanced administrative needs. In one state, the funds are used to support the salary and benefits of a staff person who plans, organizes, and directs the work of the full compensation staff. Administrative funds in the site visit states also support training programs, innovative outreach, and the development of automated claims tracking systems. One state is developing and testing a statewide tracking system for restitution fines and orders. When completed it will improve services to victims in the state by increasing the revenue available for compensation payments through the collection of restitution, and increasing awareness of the importance of restitution to all crime victims. Like other states nationwide that did use the full five percent, our site visit

states found the funds extremely useful and would like to see an increase in the percentage allowed for administrative purposes.

Several explanations emerged in states that did not take advantage of the VOCA administrative allowance. For some, all funds may be desperately needed for claimants. In some cases, state policy may forbid the use of federal VOCA money for anything other than payments to victims. In two site visit states, administrative funds were never used because the state agency overseeing the program thought it would be a political misstep to use the money for anything other than claims, even though the compensation programs reported that available funds exceeded payout needs. These programs wanted to take advantage of the administrative allowance and felt that OVC should *direct* the states to use the money for administrative activities to improve the delivery of services to victims.

In states with very small federal allocations, the five percent administrative allowance is not enough to permit significant additional services for victims or advanced training for staff. For example, five percent of Vermont's FY2002 federal compensation award is only \$6,000, too insignificant to make a difference in administrative activities. Thus, even though state administrators universally agreed with the importance of these activities, very few have the resources to do more than basic program administration. This was consistent with the findings of the national survey that "fewer than one-quarter of the states used federal administrative funds to develop strategic plans, conduct surveys or needs assessments, or engage in substantial new outreach efforts. . . ."

As noted earlier, OVC has recommended a plethora of administrative activities to improve compensation programs – from infrastructure to outreach – and has suggested many uses for the VOCA administrative allowance. As the percentage allowed is set by law, it is unlikely that many states will be able to heed these recommendations, absent legislative amendments. The NACVCB speaks for the majority of states in supporting an increase in the administrative allowance to ten percent.

OVC Discretionary Funds. In addition to the formula grants for states and territories to establish and operate crime victim assistance and compensation programs, VOCA also authorizes OVC to use three percent of the CVF (after set-asides) for discretionary grants to improve and enhance the quality and availability of victim services. The allowance will increase to five percent in FY 2003, as per the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001. Each year OVC develops a Program Plan, which identifies the training and technical assistance and demonstration initiatives to be funded on a competitive basis in the coming year.

These grants offer another potential source for compensation programs eager to improve their services. In 1997 the co-located Vermont compensation and assistance administrator applied for an OVC discretionary grant of \$1 million. The grant application identified

“potentially dangerous gaps . . . in Vermont’s victim services.”²² The grant awarded to Vermont for its Victim Services 2000 project covers a five-year period, from 1998 – 2002, and provides the resources needed to improve the range, quality, and accessibility of services available to all crime victims statewide.²³ In the first year, Vermont set out to develop a comprehensive design for integrated statewide victim services based on the recommendations in OVC’s *New Directions*. Its goals include assessing the current level of victim services, improving leadership and infrastructure, increasing victim awareness of services, training service providers, and using new technology to improve the delivery of services. Through a victim services survey, the program found a lack of awareness statewide about compensation. It then developed and implemented a public education campaign. According to the state administrator, Vermont has been able to do the needs assessment, research, planning, education, outreach, and training recommended by *New Directions*, only because of this extra money. Crime victims in the state will continue to benefit from the VS2000 grant as the training, outreach and provider support pieces of the project will ultimately remain in the Center for Crime Victim Services, which administers both the compensation and assistance grants.

Training

The *New Directions* chapter on victim compensation recommends that compensation program staff have training on victim issues and that programs set goals to process claims in an expeditious and fair manner. The NACVCB Program Standards encourage training of compensation staff “to ensure the highest efficiency and productivity in processing applications.” Staff should be trained about the program mission, mandates, and goals, as well as eligibility requirements/benefits, case processing, collateral resources, basic concepts and terms used by medical and mental health providers, basic issues related to victimization, and the criminal justice process. Advanced training would include time-management techniques and the development of written training materials. Staff training is one recommended use for the VOCA administrative allowance.

Training is particularly important for new staff as we found there were often no specific requirements for the job, other than “detail oriented,” with “victim services skills.” Our general impression from the six site visit states is that training varies considerably from program to program. While larger programs with more resources do have established training programs for new staff, in the majority of states, compensation staff receive very little formal training. Program staff most often reported being trained “on-the-job” and all agreed that more formal training of new staff would improve claims processing and victim outreach.

The site visit states had little regular in-service training to update the knowledge and skills of compensation staff. Memos sent to compensation staff regarding changes in the law were

²² From the Rural Victim Services 2000 Project Abstract: “services for all victims of crime have not been evaluated, nor have gaps in services been systematically identified; the network of victim services has not been expanded to incorporate necessary allied partnerships; few resources are available to support the infrastructure of victim services; and existing technology has not been sufficiently integrated.”

often so complex and occurred so often that processors were “baffled,” according to some reports. Staff in one state reported that the lack of clear direction on processing contributed to inconsistencies and errors in claims determinations. In another we found instances of extremely competent staff who had essentially trained themselves – by asking questions, talking to other agencies, reading NACVCB newsletters, and going to local victim meetings.

Training about victimization issues is even less structured and depends on whatever local training and victim rights events happen to be sponsored by other organizations within the state. In some cases attendance at these events is voluntary. Recently some states have required compensation staff to attend local training and National Crime Victim Rights Week events. In several states, compensation staff are participating in cross-training as recommended by OVC. They receive training from victim service providers and district attorneys on victimization, vicarious traumatization, supporting families of homicide, medical assistance, sexual assault, domestic violence, the criminal justice system, the welfare system, cultural diversity, and rape kits. Some called for additional sensitivity training about cultural diversity.

If funds are available, staff in some programs may also attend the NACVCB annual conference, considered by all to be an excellent source of current information on both claims processing and victimization issues. Most of the site visit states have made presentations at the NACVCB conferences, along with compensation administrators and staff from other states using innovative claims processing or outreach programs.

Training of victim service providers, criminal justice personnel, and health, mental health and social service providers about the crime victim compensation program is also an OVC-allowed administrative expense. Nearly all (92 percent) of the compensation administrators reported conducting activities to train direct service providers in 1999. Most of these training activities were funded from non-VOCA sources and will be discussed in a later section on outreach.

Trends and Recommendations

There is a general trend in compensation programs toward a victim service orientation, in which the claimant is defined as the program’s client and the goal is to provide the best possible client services. Keys to accomplishing this mission through program management include:

- Strong, victim-oriented leadership. This encourages staff to take a proactive stance toward processing claims and making awards.
- Various forms of coordination with victim assistance funders and providers (which may take more effort but is certainly still possible when programs are not administratively co-located):
 - Coordinating policies and funding decisions to reduce gaps in service and make maximum use of available resources. For example, services eligible for

²³ The VS2000 project is the subject of a separate NIJ-funded evaluation by Caliber Associates.

compensation reimbursement may be paid through compensation rather than victim assistance funding sources, but this requires a careful consideration of how to make the best services available to the most victims in need of these services.

- Providing training and resource materials to direct service providers so they can refer victims to compensation and assist victims in preparing eligible claims.
- Monitoring referrals from direct service providers so that areas in need of further attention can be identified and addressed.
- Joint staff meetings and participation in cross-training activities.
- Long-term financial planning that balances the need to ensure program stability and guard against fraud and abuse with the emphasis on expanding services to claimants through increased outreach, expansion of benefits and caps, and easing eligibility requirements. This is particularly critical in light of the 50 percent increase in federal compensation awards for 2003, under the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001. Strategic planning is necessary to ensure that increased funds will be spent in a way that will be most beneficial to clients and ensure continued growth of programs.
- Administrative activities such as needs assessments, strategic planning, compensation program staff training, and automated case management to enhance efficient operations. Support for these activities is rather slim under VOCA, at five percent of federal allocations, but many states do not use even this allowance for administrative activities. Obstacles to using the administrative allowance include state laws, politics, and the urgent need for funds to pay claims. As funding levels grow it would be extremely beneficial for program administrators who can use them to have additional resources for administrative activities, but the five percent allowance was unchanged by recent legislation.
- Compensation staff training seems an area in particular need of development, as many programs provide little initial orientation or in-service training to staff. In addition to basic orientation to program mission and procedures, staff need to be kept updated on changes in laws and policies. They also need training in victimization issues, cultural diversity, the criminal justice system, and basic terms and concepts used by medical, mental health, and other victim service providers.

Claims Processing

“Claims processing is the “nuts and bolts” of any compensation program. How it is accomplished speaks clearly about a state’s commitment to serving victims of crime.”²⁴

Claims processing involves a number of steps, including assigning a claim to program staff; verifying the eligibility of the claim and expenses by obtaining documentation from law enforcement, service providers, and others as necessary; and forwarding the claim through various stages until it is ready for a determination. The goal of case processing is to complete

²⁴ *New Directions from the Field*, p. 334.

the steps in an efficient and thorough manner, and in as little time as possible. Case processing time is often used as a measure of processing efficiency. In our site visits, we discussed various aspects of case processing to explore in more depth the issues involved and challenges posed at each step.

Models of Case Processing

Case Assignment. Site visit states had very different procedures for assigning cases to staff. For example, in one state, incoming claims are screened by a supervisor and assigned to different processors based on the level of difficulty of the case, with the more experienced staff assigned the more complex cases. In another state the caseload is divided regionally, allowing each claims processor to become familiar with locally-based law enforcement agencies and providers. In a third, a computer generates the case assignment based on the pending workload of the staff.

Vertical Processing vs. Use of Stations. Site visit states also varied on whether one person handles the claim all the way through or whether the claim moves along to different stations for processing. The administrators' views of these systems varied as well. Some believed that case tracking and processor accountability would be improved if one person handles the case from start to finish. Others found that using different stations (intake, investigation, eligibility determination, and payment) works more efficiently, even if claimants had to interact with different staff members along the way. The "station" system is particularly attractive to larger programs, allowing them to use clerical or administrative staff to handle the calls and letters used to obtain verifications. Within the "station" system, case assignment may depend on geographical divisions in the state.

Two-Tiered Review System. Programs generally use a two-tiered review system, whether case processing is vertically integrated or not. Straightforward cases are handled at a staff level and approvals for payment sent out without review. More complex cases – such as those with contributory misconduct issues, failure to cooperate, or loss of support -- are forwarded to a claims review section or even the program administrator or board. In some states, all cases deemed ineligible get reviewed by a team or by higher-level staff.

Decentralized Locations. A few states, including one of our site visit states, use local processing centers, in which compensation staff are located in district attorney's offices throughout the state. The main office is in the state capital. If there is a local county office where the victim is located, the claim can be approved at that level. If not, it is filed at the state level. Or, if the county office thinks the claim should be denied, it goes to the state level for a second review.

Staff Workload. Several states reported minimal staff turnover, with employees often having over five years of service and some over 20 years. Others, however, had backlogs currently or in the past because they were understaffed. In a small office, one person leaving can reduce staffing by 25 to 50 percent. These positions remained open for several months. Several states

noted that the caseload was rising and they would have to hire additional staff soon. It appears, however, that programs don't create or request new staff positions until they actually have a backlog problem. This staffing issue did not appear to be unique to compensation programs; rather, it seems to be a general problem for government programs.

Use of Manuals and Checklists

While over half of state programs use a checklist of processing steps and eligibility issues, less than half nationwide have a detailed written claims processing manual. Some of our site visit states were developing manuals and checklists, but had been operating without them in the past. One was planning to consolidate a multi-volume technical manual into one user-friendly guide. One claims specialist reported no written procedures but that "with experience you come to trust your gut instinct about cases." Others said, "it's just a case-by-case process, you can't anticipate every situation or unusual expense." Some examples of unusual case circumstances include:

- "In one case a boy got in a fight and his mother had a heart attack and claimed that it was crime related. We always try to err on the side of the victim, particularly if faced with an unusual situation."
- "We've paid for remodeled bathrooms for disabled victims."
- "A big issue in rural areas is batterers breaking windshields and disabling cars so the victim cannot escape. Our policy is now to pay these claims if the victim was nearby and the damage was intended to intimidate her."
- "We've authorized some unusual expenses on a case-by-case basis: e.g., tattoo removal for a woman whose abuser had marked her; pregnancy-related care for rape victims."

Processing Time

Speedy claims processing is an important goal for state compensation programs. From the victim's standpoint, this may be the most critical measure of a program's performance. The very first recommendation for compensation programs in *New Directions* is to expedite claims processing, with a goal that all claims be processed within 12 to 21 weeks. As OVC explains, "[d]elays in application processing can result in victims and survivors receiving harassing calls from bill collectors or delaying health or mental health treatment [. . .] [Delays also increase] anxiety for crime victims and frustrations for service providers."

Based on 2000 data submitted to OVC, the average case processing time for our six site visit states ranged from 6 weeks to 28 weeks, with a cross state average of 15.8 weeks.²⁵ While processing time can serve as an important indicator of program efficiency, it can be very tricky to compare across states because states vary considerably in how they calculate processing time, both when they start the clock and when they stop it.

²⁵ These data are no longer provided on OVC's website, for more recent years.

Starting the Clock. The site visit states all have an initial protocol for screening and logging in new claims before they are assigned. Generally applications are logged in as they are received,²⁶ but not assigned for processing until they are complete. Definitions of “completeness” varied, however, from state to state. For example:

- One state requires the applicant to include information about the crime and all losses and expenses claimed before it is assigned. If information is missing, the state notifies the victim or advocate assisting the victim. The case is closed out as inactive – thus suspending the processing time clock – until the missing information is received.
- At the other end of the spectrum, one state numbers its cases and assigns them for processing, even if basic information is missing or the application is not notarized as required or lacks a proper signature. Processing time is calculated from this point and the compensation staff is responsible for perfecting the application.
- In other states, claims are counted and processing time starts once all critical information about the claimant (name, social security number, address) is complete, even if the law enforcement report is not attached.
- In another state, the claim is considered complete and processing time starts once it is signed, even if other information such as the claimant’s social security number is missing.

Stopping the Clock. Some states “stop the clock” when the decision is made and a request is sent to the state treasury for a check. Other states include the actual payment process in overall claim processing time. These definitional variations may account for differences in processing time, as may variations in time needed to cut and send out checks.

As noted in the national survey of compensation administrators (see report one from this evaluation), obtaining verifications is the most time-consuming element of claims processing. We explored issues around verification and coordinating with victim advocates and service providers, to identify ways in which efficiency could be increased.

Verification Procedures

Law enforcement reports are needed to verify claimants’ eligibility for compensation, considering both type of crime and definitions of victims. In addition, claimants must present evidence of expenses, including lost wages, medical or dental bills, records of counseling sessions, invoices for funeral arrangement, and other bills for eligible expenses. Claimants must also verify collateral sources of payment, or lack thereof, for eligible types of expenses.

Compensation programs vary in how much of the verification legwork they do compared to what is required of the claimant. The majority, however, do *not* require the victim-claimant to obtain verifications: 79 percent nationwide reported that the compensation staff are responsible

²⁶ Most states check to see if the application is a duplicate.

for obtaining police reports; 67 percent that compensation staff are responsible for securing verifications from providers; and 64 percent that compensation staff are responsible for obtaining verifications from employers.²⁷ The site visit programs all reported taking substantial responsibility for obtaining verifications. For example:

- “The state does 99 percent of the work for the claimant. We get in touch with the police and will even start looking through bills and medical records before we get the police report. The claimant gets a letter that the file is being worked on.”
- “We usually have to wait to get the police report. In some cases, the criminal complaint will do. For homicide cases, the specialists go to the police department to retrieve the files because they are so large. Specialists try to minimize work by the victim by seeking hospital and police reports themselves rather than requesting the victim to obtain them.”
- “Clerical staff handle the verification process, using fax or mail to obtain verifications directly from law enforcement, hospitals, etc. We are working with other state agencies to try to access their databases directly. The goal is to minimize paperwork burdens on the victim.”
- “We reach out to all major hospitals and train their billing staff on how to fill out forms for the compensation application. Hospital staff constantly need retraining.”

When the compensation program takes responsibility for obtaining verifications, there are ways to expedite the process. Several programs noted that faxing requests or making telephone calls to providers rather than sending letters can shave off a few days of processing time. Being able to access information in another agency’s database would be even quicker, provided confidentiality issues could be addressed. One state prepares a weekly printout of case status as a tickler system for what has to be done the next week.

Obviously if complete documentation is submitted with the compensation application, the approval process and payment will proceed more expeditiously – a goal for the claimant as well as the program. While each of the site visit programs reported helping with verifications, they would prefer to see a victim advocate or service provider assist the victim with the application and secure all necessary verifications.²⁸ This might be a law enforcement-based victim advocate, a victim advocate in the prosecutor’s office, a hospital social worker, a domestic violence shelter, rape crisis center, mental health counselor, or any other service provider who the victim comes into contact with after the crime. Without this assistance, some claims staff might simply deny the claim rather than call the victim or police to obtain more information. Some claims specialists reported having no incentive to spend the time necessary to get complete records, particularly if their performance evaluation is based on the number of claims completed.

²⁷ Compensation Administrator Survey Q. 12.

²⁸ We are not talking about using attorneys to help victims with compensation. While some states do allow claimants to recover attorney’s fees for assistance with compensation, it is the general consensus that the application process should be easy enough to access without the assistance of an attorney.

Coordination with Service Providers. Some states reported that up to 90 percent of claims came “attached to victim advocates from a prosecutor-based service program.” In this “best case” scenario, the advocate can spend time with the victim assessing his/her needs, can secure the law enforcement report, and the compensation program can go directly to the advocate if information is missing from the claim file.²⁹ Direct service providers, who are locally-based, may be in the best position to expedite the information-gathering and verification process and interact with victims during the weeks and months immediately following the crime. Moreover, victim advocates and providers are an important outreach and referral source for compensation claimants. For example:

- “I may ask if there were medical expenses in assault cases or if they need counseling or time off from work. I will offer to help with forms and find that quite a few victims can’t read or write. I also act as a go-between with the compensation office if the victim needs to know the status of the claim. From time to time I may call a provider to tell them that compensation is coming and to hold off on their bills.” (*from a prosecutor-based victim advocate*)
- “The compensation program used to send a letter to law enforcement and ask for the report but now expects the victim advocate or provider to get both the initial and supplemental reports and send them in with the application. It’s not difficult for providers to get the law enforcement report, although it would be a big hassle if the victim had to do it alone. Often the supplemental reports have a lot of police officer opinion in them about victim contributory conduct or lack of cooperation that is upsetting for the victim to see.” (*from a non-profit direct service provider*)
- “Sometime during our initial meeting with a sexual assault victim, we sit down to fill out the compensation forms for the rape kit and counseling. The victim signs the form, but we get the police report and mail it in for the victim. We keep copies of all compensation applications in our files so we can follow up with the compensation program on behalf of the victim.” (*from a non-profit direct service provider*)
- “We give packets of compensation information to the victim advocate in the solicitor’s office. They give it to the victim but often the victim takes it home and doesn’t look at it for six months. If we make contact with the victim first, we go ahead and handle it. We go into the victim’s home and try to get the application filled out. We will occasionally make follow-up calls for the victim to the compensation office. We try to get the victim involved in the process rather than doing everything for them because that makes them dependent. It helps their healing to be involved in process.” (*from a non-profit direct service provider*)
- “We have a lot of victims who can’t read the form. We help them fill out the whole thing. Even if they are literate, it’s vital for the victim advocate to help them. The package is too big and has too much information in it for the victim to see too soon. But the application has to be filed right away before a therapist can get paid.” (*from a non-profit direct service provider*)

²⁹ Service providers/advocates who take an active role in helping clients with compensation can also affect the success of the compensation program’s outreach efforts, thus increasing numbers of claims submitted.

Where advocates/providers are actively assisting clients with the compensation process, the process may be expedited and thus more satisfactory from the standpoint of each of the stakeholders: the victim, the compensation program, and the providers awaiting payment.

However, we found that many direct service providers were only minimally satisfying their obligations to assist victims. Many VOCA-funded direct service providers did not know that they are *required* by federal law to assist “potential recipients in seeking crime victim compensation benefits.”³⁰ Some did not have current brochures and applications available for victims, and staff often did not understand the state’s eligibility and benefits requirements. Hotline workers and others doing intake for non-profits were not always trained on compensation issues and did not ask victims about financial needs. One provider reported, “We think more in terms of crisis than long-term. We might ask about emergency needs and immediate hospital bills but not think about counseling costs down the road.”

Nonprofit providers frequently reported deferring to the criminal justice system victim advocate on all questions about compensation. In one state, a VOCA funded service provider did not even keep a supply of applications, believing that the victim-witness coordinator in the prosecutor’s office was the only one able to make referrals to compensation. Another nonprofit provider said, “We refer a lot of people to the advocate in the prosecutor’s office for criminal cases and also for victims compensation. Although we could fill those out ourselves, the victim advocate does it more than we do.” This makes sense at first blush because the victim will have extensive contact with the advocate in the criminal justice system. However, not all cases are prosecuted and compensation is available even in cases where the offender is not apprehended.

Nonprofit providers might prefer to defer to law enforcement, rather than a prosecutor-based advocate, in states where victims rights legislation requires law enforcement personnel to notify crime victims of the availability of compensation.³¹ Such deferral would not, however, discharge the nonprofit provider’s separate responsibility to the victim, even assuming the government advocate was complying fully with notification requirements. And many interviewees thought that victims were not getting information about compensation from the criminal justice system. The receptionist for one site visit program noted, “I get 75 to 100 calls a day on the 1-800 number. Lots of victims call because they got this number from the police and don’t know why they were given the number.”

The NACVCB, representing the compensation programs, has been outspoken in recommending that victim advocates and providers do more than simply inform victims of the availability of compensation and provide them with application forms. The role of advocates, according to the NACVCB, extends to:

³⁰ 42 U.S.C.A. Sec. 10603 (b) (1)(E).

³¹ State law requires law enforcement to inform victims about compensation in 65% of states, according to the Compensation Administrator Survey.

- Learning about state eligibility requirements and benefits
- Asking the victim about financial losses and third-party payers such as insurance policies
- Helping victims fill out forms and assisting them in obtaining verifications
- Volunteering to be a go-between for the victim with the compensation program
- Following up with both the program and the victim as needed

One site visit program has made a serious effort to help advocates comply with these minimum suggestions. It produced and distributed several comprehensive written resources for VOCA-funded and other service providers who work with victims. The claim form was simplified and an instruction book developed and distributed to all governmental victim service programs. Each police departments received 25 packages; each of the nonprofit victim service providers received 50 applications and 25 instruction books. The program also regularly distributes fact sheets on particular topics and advises advocates about changes in compensation policy. Victim service providers can track claim status electronically on behalf of their clients and the program is developing a way for advocates to file claims electronically. Ideally, all states should strive for this level of cooperation and coordination with service providers and victim advocates.³²

Most states do not, however, have an ideal level of cooperation. When the “seamless web” is broken, the complaints go both ways. Service providers who do spend time helping clients with compensation often expressed dissatisfaction with the claims process. Complaints ranged from the font and colors used on the application form to more serious questions of communication. Many of these problems could affect processing time and satisfaction with the process. For example:

- “I help the victim fill out the form and send it in for processing. I give a copy to the victim. We have asked [the compensation office] to let us know what’s happening, but they start sending the victim lots of new forms to fill out and the victims don’t understand. The victims call here because they don’t want to call a 1-800 number. We don’t know what’s going on because the program won’t send us copies of its correspondence with the victim. We would be happy to continue to follow up if we knew what was happening.”
- “They are overworked and understaffed. You get voicemail much more than you get a person.”
- “Used to be that one staff person was assigned to each county. And then we knew the people. Now it’s organized differently. I can have a victim here waiting for an answer and call the compensation program and get a voicemail. Actually I get a receptionist who transfers me to a staff investigator and then I get voicemail.”

³² We should note that one nonprofit provider warned that compensation programs that are very “service provider friendly,” can be almost “victim unfriendly.” Rather than talking to a victim who calls, the compensation program might refer her to her advocate or service provider.

These concerns may reflect management inefficiencies and institutional problems endemic to any state government benefit program. In response, OVC has encouraged states to improve their technological capacity through automatic claims-tracking systems and technical support from OVC's mentoring program. An increase in the five percent allowance for administrative activities, as recommended by the NACVCB, would be necessary for many states to take advantage of new technology for claims processing. Several site visit states reported difficulties with their current computer system; a complete revamping was considered critical.

In-House Advocates at Compensation Programs. Many system inefficiencies and technical difficulties may also be indicative of a state's lack of commitment to serving victims of crime. In response, OVC (1998) has recommended that "victim advocacy be institutionalized in compensation programs." Moreover, OVC Victim Assistance Program Guidelines were revised in 1997 to allow VOCA victim assistance grant funds to be used to support a victim advocate within the compensation programs. This advocate could both assist victims through the compensation process *and* help victims access services and resources that are not available through compensation. Presumably, the in-house advocate would be able to assess the compensation process from the victim's perspective and identify roadblocks in the system that could be changed. According to the national survey, however, the recommendation for victim service liaison staff in the compensation program has not gained universal currency. Only 42 percent of the compensation programs reported having a person on staff designated to be a liaison with victims and only 14 percent of the programs had applied for VOCA assistance grant funds to support this position. Quite a few, including at least one of the site visit states, did not know that this funding might be available.

Two of the states we visited were utilizing in-house advocates. Both found them to be extremely helpful in terms of facilitating victim contact needed for claims processing. This should, theoretically, improve processing time, although it is too early to observe significant changes. We did, however, note immediate improvements in the scope of services offered to compensation clients. For example:

- One state utilizes a "victim assistance" person between initial intake of the compensation application and assignment for claims processing. This person's role is to contact the victim (or victim advocate/provider helping the victim) by phone to get all the information needed to complete the application form. At this time, she will determine if the victim needs other services and make appropriate referrals. For example, when an 80-year old Chinese tourist was assaulted and robbed, she arranged a place for his wife to stay until he was able to leave the hospital and continue his travels.
- Another compensation program recently created a Direct Victim Services Section staffed by two legal assistants. They are receiving extensive training in victimization and crisis response through OVC's National Victim Assistance Academy, the National Organization for Victim Assistance's (NOVA), and other classes and workshops. These advocates take calls from victims inquiring about the

compensation program, provide program information, assess immediate client needs, make referrals to local service providers, and do outreach (directly or through local service providers) to victims of crimes reported in the media.

Trends and Recommendations

State compensation programs use different models and procedures for processing claims, and define processing time differently, but face many of the same challenges to processing claims as quickly, efficiently, and accurately as possible.

- Programs use different criteria for assigning cases to staff and for processing cases (e.g., vertical processing vs. use of stations, decentralized vs. centralized locations). There are advantages and drawbacks to each model, with no single approach emerging as a best practice across the board. However, many programs face staffing shortages and subsequent case overloads, which can decrease how quickly and thoroughly cases are processed. The use of administrative funds to support more staff positions could help alleviate this problem. In addition, incentive structures that do not encourage staff to take proactive steps to process cases thoroughly should be examined and changed as needed.
- Staff manuals for claims processing procedures and checklists to ensure that all necessary steps are completed have not been widely used in the past, but there is an increasing emphasis on developing these tools. Such manuals should provide general guidance according to fundamental principles of the program's mission and policies, but should also allow flexibility for staff to respond appropriately to the many unique circumstances that often arise in compensation claims.
- Processing time has been identified as a critical criterion of good program functioning, and many programs have taken steps to decrease processing time. However, programs still vary enormously in how they define the process endpoints that are needed to compute processing time. If comparisons are to be made across states – for example, to identify states with very short processing times so they can serve as a resource to other states seeking to improve their own statistics – it is necessary to use some sort of uniform standards for when to start and stop the clock on claims. Collection of more detailed data on various milestones of case processing (e.g., obtaining police reports, obtaining providers' bills, etc.) would also be useful in identifying sources of delays and remedial steps.
- Obtaining verifications has been widely recognized as the most time-consuming phase of claims processing, and potentially the most burdensome to claimants. Most programs take primary responsibility for this, and identify close working relationships with direct service providers as a key to obtaining complete verifications in a timely manner. For victim advocates to function most efficiently as sources of referral to compensation and help with the application and verification processes, they need up-to-date training on compensation policies and procedures, a steady supply of application forms and other materials, and strong communication with compensation program staff. Direct service providers who are aware of changes in compensation policies to make the program more victim-friendly will be less likely to pre-screen potentially eligible claimants out (based on

outdated compensation practices). Advocates with a strong understanding of the compensation program will be able to refer and help prepare eligible and well-documented claims, which is advantageous to the victim and the compensation program. Good communication between advocates and compensation staff will provide input to the program about victims' perspectives, and help advocates come to a better understanding of how the program functions.

- Advocates on staff at the compensation program can be effective at helping claimants with the process and referring them to other services; several of the site visit programs had such staff and considered their role very useful.
- The use of technology (even as simple as phones and faxes) can also help expedite the process. Again, administrative funds to support the purchase and implementation of these resources could be quite helpful.
- Programs may also wish to review documentation requirements to identify any that are not strictly necessary and so could be eliminated.

Claims Determinations

The end goal of the compensation process is to decide whether each claim should be paid (in full or in part) in accordance with eligibility criteria, defined by types of crimes, types of victims, types of expenses, payment caps, police reporting and cooperation requirements, payor-of-last-resort requirements, filing deadlines, and contributory misconduct issues.

While every state compensation program covers the same basic expenses for victims of violent crime, state laws vary in how they define each eligibility requirement or benefit structure. The statutory language itself may dictate the policies for eligibility and coverage. In addition, programs may exercise considerable discretion in interpreting and applying the statutory language. According to the NACVCB Program Standards, a "good decision" must be "faithful to [both] the program's mission to serve victims, as well as its responsibility to abide by statutory requirements." Beyond this balancing of goals, a "good decision" must also be:

- Based on a full understanding of the relevant facts and circumstances of the case, rather than mere conjecture or opinion;
- Made by accurately applying the program's statute and rules, rather than what the decision maker may think the law should be;
- Fair and free of bias;
- Consistent with prior decisions, but that takes into account any pertinent distinctions that make the case different from other cases; and
- Rendered as promptly as a full review of the case allows.

In our on-site review, we looked for indications that compensation programs were rendering fair and consistent decisions, as well as prompt and accurate ones. Where statutory language was open to interpretation, we looked for signs that the program was "erring on the side of the victim."

Approval and Denial Rates

Claims are most often approved for payment. However, approval rates vary among programs and fluctuate from year to year within programs. Trends in approval rates for our site visit states were mixed, as they were for the nationwide sample. Common reasons given for fluctuations were:

- States reporting an increase in staff resources saw approval rates go up, indicating that they were able to devote more attention to obtaining complete information on claims.
- Better assistance by service providers and advocates working with victims increased approval rates.
- Better pre-screening by victim advocates cut down on marginal claims and increased approval rates.
- Extra outreach to new victims may encourage many more applications from ineligible persons, causing the approval rate to decrease.

Approval rates were also affected by claims processing procedures. One program, with improved data collection methods, found that more claims were being denied. In the past, the program had given the victim the benefit of the doubt when information about eligibility was missing. In another state, a claims examiner said it was easier to approve cases because “you don’t have to justify it like you do for a denial.”

Approval rates also depend on definitions and processing procedures. For example, in a couple of site visit states, claims are denied at the intake stage if there are no receipts for expenses, which may explain very low approval rates. Other states keep all claims in the system in case eligible expenses are incurred later, and may eventually declare eligible claims without expenses as “ineligible” rather than “denied.” Or they may consider these cases approved even if expenses are never submitted, which may overstate approval rates. One state with an 85 percent claims approval rate reported that only 68 percent of approved claimants actually submitted bills to utilize their benefits.

Approval rates also vary by how states count submitted claims. One state counts every claim submitted, even if they are not for eligible crimes (e.g., property crimes), are for ineligible expenses, or have no police report. Others wait for a claim to be perfected before it is counted. The first method may overstate the number of claims received and number of claims rejected compared to the others.

Overall, as with case processing time, we found that disparities in definitions and processing and counting procedures may skew any comparison of approval and denial rates.

Reasons for Denial and Areas of Expansion

Looking beyond approval/denial rates to the reasons for denial, we did find some important indicators of a program's performance. All compensation programs impose technical filing and reporting requirements on claimants seeking compensation. All have policies that limit the classes of victims eligible for compensation as well as the types of benefits available. In all states, victim compensation is the payor of last resort; victims must first access other collateral sources of payment such as medical or auto insurance, employee benefit programs, Social Security and Medicaid. And all states require the victim to be innocent of criminal activity or significant misconduct that caused or contributed to the victim's injury or death.

We spoke with program administrators, compensation staff, and victim advocates about each of these statutory requirements. We learned that the same statutory language can be interpreted differently by different programs, as well as by different staff in the same state. Some programs may rigidly follow statutory requirements, like an insurance company trying to protect funds. Others look for ways to interpret or expand laws and policies to be more responsive to the needs of victims. This discussion focuses on various program requirements that may be grounds for denying a claim or determining it ineligible, and ways in which programs are expanding these requirements to serve clients better.

Technical Requirements: Claim Filing Deadlines and Police Reporting and Cooperation Requirements. Nationwide, an average of approximately 19 percent of claims denied were for failure to comply with state filing deadlines, law enforcement reporting, and/or cooperation requirements. Most compensation programs impose two separate deadlines – a short period within which the crime must be reported to the police (“reporting requirement”) and a longer time limit for filing (“filing requirement”) an application for compensation. In addition, federal guidelines developed by OVC require state programs to promote victim cooperation with the reasonable requests of law enforcement agencies. States determine what constitutes victim cooperation.

The filing deadline, which typically is one year from the date of the crime (this may range across states from six months to several years), serves both cost containment and efficient processing goals. As with all statutes of limitations, the filing deadline ensures that factual issues can be investigated while the information is still available. It limits the number of claims filed to crimes occurring within the recent past. While this is an appropriate administrative goal, we found that victims miss filing deadlines for many reasons beyond simply tardiness. They may not learn about the availability of compensation until long after the crime. Some suffer significant victimization trauma that impedes their ability to file the necessary paperwork on time. Others may be too embarrassed to come forward and admit that they need help, particularly with mental health counseling. While most administrators will extend the time limit for good cause, and there is a national trend toward extending filing deadlines across the board, programs do regularly deny claims that are filed late.

Most of our site visit states have the typical one-year deadline, although one imposes a shorter 180 day filing period and another has no deadline. Consistent with practice in most states, our site visit states have “good cause” exceptions and several are willing to extend the filing requirement for child victims until their 18th or 19th birthday. Others will extend for five years from the last incident if the victim was under 18 at the time. One site visit state has no filing deadline, and reported experiencing no major caseload issues because of this.

“It is often very difficult for violent crime victims to deal with paperwork and the other administrative details involved in the aftermath of crime. Rather than requiring victims to do what is, for some, nearly impossible, we make every effort to create systems through which investigators can get the information they need to validate these older claims. We believe the ability to reach and serve those crime victims who, for one reason or another, did not apply for compensation until far after the crime, far outweighs any added administrative work involved.”

Several administrators interviewed would like to see their state law changed to increase the time for filing. OVC has also recommended that filing deadlines be eliminated or at least extended to three years from the crime.

Like the filing deadlines, law enforcement reporting and cooperation requirements are common. Generally, victims are required to report the crime to law enforcement within 72 hours but there are many variations (e.g., 48 hours, five days, “timely”). Consistent with practice in most states, our site visit programs reported having “good cause” exceptions for reporting requirements (such as cases of child abuse or domestic violence where victims may fear retaliation if they report).

Historically, the law enforcement reporting and cooperation requirements were included to promote victim cooperation with the criminal justice system and to minimize the possibility of fraudulent claims by ensuring that a crime occurred.³³ Several administrators emphatically stated that providing compensation encourages reporting of the crime and cooperation with the investigation and prosecution.

“Domestic violence victims and others reluctant to report to the police may do so to get compensation to pay for mental health counseling. The second major source of referrals in this state is from mental health counselors. When a victim is getting counseling, it may be easier for them to deal with the dilemma of reporting.”

Moreover, as judicially imposed criminal fines and penalties are a primary funding stream for compensation, support for the compensation program in the criminal justice community is critical. The reporting and cooperation requirements are key to maintaining this support.

³³ In two site visit states, lack of evidence that a crime was committed accounted for over 30% of denied claims.

On the other hand, these requirements may pose insurmountable barriers for some classes of crime victims, e.g., victims of child sexual assault,³⁴ rape, and domestic violence, who are often reluctant to report to the police and/or cooperate with prosecution efforts. Nationwide, 53 percent of administrators believed that eligible crime victims were discouraged because of reporting requirements. Some administrators and service providers in site visit states specifically mentioned that domestic violence victims may be underrepresented as compensation claimants because of their fear of reporting to the police and because some do not even see their abuse as a crime. Reporting may also be a barrier for stalking victims who do not know who is stalking them or don't have enough information for the police to take a report. Members of immigrant populations may believe that the justice system is "anti-immigrant" and will not report for fear of deportation. Gun victims living in communities characterized by gang violence, drive-by shootings, and drug wars may also be unwilling to cooperate with law enforcement because of fear of retaliation/intimidation by the offender or simply because of ridicule from their peers.

The OVC Program Guidelines on Victim Compensation encourage program administrators to be lenient about cooperation and reporting requirements in cases where they may present special barriers for the victim. The administrators in our site visit states were sensitive to these issues. Several said that the "good cause" exception was "liberally construed" for minors and victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. Others required reporting but would waive cooperation requirements such as testifying at trial if the victim feared retaliation. Many service providers and a few administrators recommended legislative changes to allow a domestic violence victim to qualify for compensation if she filed for a civil restraining order, even if she did not report the violence to the police. Similarly, they believed a child victim should qualify if the crime was reported to child protective services or other social service agency of the state government. OVC has also recommended that states extend reporting deadlines and allow reports to third parties or to other agencies such as family courts.

Some advocates felt that the same eligibility requirements can be interpreted differently depending on the program administrator. As one victim advocate told us:

"The eligibility requirements are too up to interpretation. Every time the governor changes, we get a new attitude. We've had a constipated process under conservative administrations that imposed unnecessary restrictions, trying to find ways to save money. They did a lot of victim blaming and forced domestic violence and sexual assault victims to cooperate and prosecute. The new administration has been opening things up and will err on the side of the victim. The same statute can be interpreted in a victim friendly way. But they have to totally rebuild from the prior administration."

³⁴ Victims of child sexual assault often do not tell anyone until many years after the crime. One program reported that they frequently are victimized again as an adult and the recent crime and trauma brings up old memories of abuse. If the recent victimization is reported to the police, the program will pay for counseling needed because of the earlier abuse.

In the same states, compensation staff told us that policies had changed and eligibility requirements would no longer be stringently applied if they unfairly disqualified applicants. Statutory requirements and victim needs were balanced on a case-by-case basis. As one administrator said, “There are no hard and fast rules. I use my discretion.” For example, the program used to require victims to cooperate throughout the prosecution of the case. Now it “might pay” if the victim reported but didn’t want to testify.

We found that shifts in program philosophy, such as directives to “err on the side of the victim,” must be clearly communicated to the field as well as to claims processors. Many advocates remember stringent and inflexible reporting and cooperation requirements that screened out potential compensation claimants, including victims of child abuse and sexual assault. They prescreen new clients to avoid disappointment. The following comments, from providers in a state where policies have changed, suggest that advocates’ perceptions of compensation programs may not always keep up with new developments.

- “The reporting time for children can be longer if they are afraid to tell. But if they tell momma, and momma does not report within the time limit, the claim is denied. This is very tough on kids who need counseling and have uncooperative parents or parents who don’t believe them.”
- “It’s often more than 48 hours [the reporting deadline] before we hear about cases of sexual assault on campus. The compensation program will deny these claims. It’s not worth the time to fill out the application. The law requires that the forensic exam be conducted within 72 hours. Police reporting requirements should be the same.”
- “If I know that a victim won’t go to court to testify, I won’t tell her about compensation.”

Types of Crimes, Victims, and Expenses Covered. All states have policies that limit the classes of victims eligible for compensation and the benefits available to them. Victims of violent crime who suffer injury, including physical and emotional damages, as a direct result of the crime are eligible for compensation. Crimes covered include rape, robbery, assault, homicide, sexual abuse, drunk driving crashes, child sexual abuse, and domestic violence. Victims are typically defined as those to whom the crime occurred, and a limited set of secondary victims closely related to the primary victim. Federal guidelines provide that states are authorized to use federal funds to pay for medical and dental expenses, mental health counseling, lost wages and loss of support, funeral/burial expenses, and crime scene clean-up costs. Many states cover a number of additional types of expenses as well.

While many victim advocates believe that compensation coverage should be extended to some property crimes, administrators are more likely to argue that the resources simply are not available for the staggering number of victims of theft, fraud, and other property crimes. Recent OVC guidelines encourage the use of compensation for very limited types of expenses related to property crimes such as fraud (namely counseling expenses). This seems a cautious initial step

toward extending benefits to victims of property crimes. Some advocates support this approach, while others believe that violent crime victims' needs are more pressing and still sufficiently unmet to preclude using compensation funds for property crime victims.

Several states are expanding their coverage to victims of property crimes, albeit in limited fashion. One will pay up to \$500 for property loss directly impacting a victim's quality of life, but this benefit is limited to the disabled or those over 60 years old. Another will reimburse stolen cash up to \$200 for disabled victims and senior citizens below the poverty level. A third will pay for property loss up to \$500 for essential personal property including \$100 cash loss. One of the site visit states will reimburse victims who rely on public benefits for income when these benefits are stolen, above a minimum level.

Compensable victims are primarily those directly injured or threatened with injury as a result of the crime. States also define classes of secondary or derivative victims who may be eligible for compensation benefits. These include parents, children, spouses and other family members of the victim. They may also include caretakers, others living with the victim, or witnesses to the crime. State statutes differ greatly in their coverage of secondary victims. Some allow lost wages for family members who care for victims; mental health counseling for close family and household members of homicide victims; and loss of support for homicide survivors. Some only recognize secondary victims in homicide cases.

Most of the administrators interviewed believed that definitions of secondary victims should be expanded, particularly as we learn more about the effect of violent crime on child witnesses. Thus the site visit states reflected the thinking of the majority of compensation programs nationwide. One site visit state has suggested new statutory language that would allow counseling expenses for secondary victims in all cases, not just homicide. Without a change, claims from family members for mental health counseling would be denied if the victim was in a coma. Other administrators wanted to see restrictive legislation modified to extend eligibility to anyone who is a blood relative or has a strong relationship to the victim, same-sex partners, and people living in the same household as the victim.

While several state statutes appear to limit coverage for secondary victims, we found that this was an area where "victim-friendly" administrators could exercise creativity in expanding benefits. For example, one program was willing to pay counseling expenses for child witnesses to domestic violence even though they were not a recognized class of secondary victims. The reimbursement was justified as adjunct therapy assumed to benefit the primary victim. On the other hand, if intake staff are not properly trained, they may deny claims based on strictly construed secondary victim eligibility criteria before the administrator or supervisory staff are even consulted.

Compensation programs provide financial assistance to victims for crime-related out-of-pocket expenses such as medical care, mental health counseling, lost wages, and crime scene

clean-up. In cases of homicide, compensation pays funeral and burial expenses, loss of support, and counseling for secondary victims such as family members. Essential personal care items such as prosthetics, prescription eyeglasses, hearing aids, and dental appliances can be repaired or replaced with compensation funds.

In addition to these expenses as specified in federal guidelines, many states have added a number of other types of expenses to their eligibility lists. These may include durable medical equipment such as wheelchairs and hospital beds, certain transportation expenses, rehabilitation, physical therapy, replacement services (e.g., housekeeping or child care services formerly provided by the victim), installing locks or other security devices after a break-in, lost tuition for a child unable to attend school, tuition costs for children who lost a source of support, ramps or modifications of homes and vehicles for paralyzed victims, and interest-free loans for homicide survivors. Other expenses paid by our site visit states include moving expenses, attorney fees for compensation-related services, and replacement of stolen cash benefits. A very few states pay for pain and suffering. There is clearly a trend toward expanding the types of expenses eligible for compensation.

There is also an emphasis on improving coverage for mental health counseling (which has always been a compensable expense). It is now widely recognized that the emotional damage and psychological consequences of crime can persist long after the physical injuries are healed. OVC, along with other Office of Justice Program funding offices, has taken a leading role in supporting the expansion of mental health services for crime victims. VOCA assistance grants fund a myriad of mental health activities, from counselors and support groups at the local service provider level to the development of professional curricula at the state and national level. In 1991, OVC funded the NACVCB to develop guidelines on the evaluation and payment of mental health counseling claims by state compensation programs. The purpose of this guide was to raise awareness of significant issues that programs should consider in developing their policies and practices. The guide identified several concerns of compensation programs in evaluating mental health claims, including the need for treatment; its relation to the crime; its duration and cost; and the qualifications of providers. These are many of the same concerns that programs face today.

The percentage of claims paid for mental health benefits varies enormously from state to state. Site visit states ranged from a low of three percent to a high of 41 percent. The reasons for the differences were difficult to pin down, but may be a function of awareness about psychological effects of victimization, market forces, and the types of victims who apply for compensation. In states with extensive free counseling services, the compensation program may receive fewer claims. Where many private counselors are available for referrals, there may be more claims. Insurance coverage may also be a factor. One state reported paying a lot of mental health claims because mental health benefits under private insurance "are dismal" and there is a long waiting list for Medicaid benefits. States with a high volume of child abuse and child sexual abuse cases may have more mental health claims as these victims are considered to need a

lot of counseling and social service agencies often do more outreach for children. Domestic violence victims are often reluctant to report to law enforcement and thus may not qualify for any type of compensation.

The states varied in how much effort they put into preparing guidelines for reviewing mental health claims. Those with detailed guidelines and manuals appeared to have an easier time processing the claims and paid out a higher percentage of claims for mental health. One large state has a special unit to review complicated mental health claims based on a Standard of Care Manual. Complicated claims include those that involve persons with severe developmental disabilities, those with a prior history of mental illness, in-patient care, very large claims (over \$10,000), complex child trauma cases, or treatment that extends for years after the crime.

Nationwide, 24 administrators reported imposing additional verification requirements on mental health providers, and the providers complained about payment and verification delays. A few study states likewise had elaborate verifications requirements for providers to submit, including detailed information about the client's symptoms, pre-existing conditions, family support system for victim, and copies of session notes. While these requirements may be considered overly burdensome for providers and intrusive on the client's privacy, they don't appear to affect the percentage of claims for mental health. On the other hand, states that downplay the role of compensation for mental health benefits in their publications, e.g., by referring to mental health only as one type of medical expense, appear to have fewer claims.

Four out of six site visit states reported imposing caps or session limits on mental health benefits. Some states capped the mental health benefit at 20 sessions. Several states reported that a new treatment plan had to be submitted after 20 sessions, but that 20 sessions should be adequate in most cases. According to the compensation staff in one state, the cap has not been harmful to victims as few actually submit bills that reach the cap. However, victim advocates expressed concern about the adequacy of 20 sessions. "You need that much at least initially and then the case doesn't go to court for a year and you need more counseling."

There were some comments on the value of therapy. "I'm not so worried about wasting comp money; but more that endless psychoanalytic therapy may not be helping the victim address the trauma from the crime and move on." Several victims participating in focus groups stated a preference for peer support groups over one-on-one professional counseling.

Lost wages are another type of allowable expense whose payment requirements have been identified as needing improvement. In one study state, victims are not eligible for a lost wage benefit until they have missed more than two continuous weeks of work. Benefits are paid only for days missed over the first 14. Advocates in this state were concerned that this restriction deprived many victims of needed income. As many victims have limited income to start with, two weeks of lost wages is devastating. One direct service provider reported, "I personally think this is useless. No one is out for 14 consecutive days unless the injuries were catastrophic. You

can't get lost wages to take off a day to go to court or to the doctor. This needs to be changed.” This state has changed the policy since our site visit. In a second site visit state a similar requirement exists but can be waived for victims over 60. This state's program has recommended eliminating the 2-week restriction.

Payment Caps. The state programs set their own administrative rules and reimbursement maximums, which average around \$35,000 and range from a low of \$5,000 to \$180,000. All but a very few states have an overall cap on total payment amounts, and many states have sub-caps on amounts paid for various types of expenses. In practice, the average award amount is well below even the lowest cap, although in a few cases further payments may be denied because the claim has reached the cap (e.g., drunk driving crashes or shootings resulting in catastrophic injuries and enormous medical bills).

A few states set higher limits for catastrophic or permanent injuries, such as those suffered at times by victims of gun violence or drunk driving crashes.³⁵ In addition to medical and mental health expenses, spinal cord injured and/or brain damaged victims may require long term care, special transportation services, modifications to housing, and occupational therapy. For the most severely injured, a powered wheelchair can cost more than \$20,000. OVC has recommended that all programs try to increase medical benefits for victims of catastrophic physical injury.

Nationwide the cap on funeral benefits was the one most in need of revision. Funeral benefits caps ranged from \$2500 to \$5000 in our site visit states. Programs wanted to see this benefit raised to come closer to the actual coverage for a funeral and burial in the state, and in one of the site visit states such legislation was in progress.

Payor of Last Resort Requirements. Under state law, victim compensation is the payor of last resort for crime-related expenses.³⁶ Victims are eligible only for those expenses not covered by private insurance, public insurance and benefits programs, restitution, civil damage awards, and any other sources of recompense. Since payment from some of these sources may take years to receive, compensation programs will often provide the victim with more timely payment with the understanding that funds received in the future for expenses paid by the compensation program will be forwarded to the compensation program (subrogation). Losses completely covered by collateral sources account for an average of 15 percent of denials nationwide.

We asked compensation administrators, staff, and victim advocates how this requirement was administered and if it presented a barrier for some victims. We heard that young sexual assault victims might be reluctant to use private insurance if they were covered on their parents' policy. Similarly, domestic violence victims might be deterred from filing if the abuser was the

³⁵ For example, New York offers unlimited medical coverage.

³⁶ Under federal law, compensation programs are the payor of last resort with regard to “federal or federally-financed programs” such as Veteran’s Benefits, Medicare, and Medicaid.

insurance holder. Others might not want to file for worker's compensation because of the cost to the employer, as well as the embarrassment of discussing the victimization in the workplace.

Two programs stated that they would or had waived the payor of last resort requirement in cases where it presented major difficulties for the applicant. One said it would waive primarily for mental health counseling expenses, but did require claimants to apply to collateral sources for medical expenses and lost wages. In addition to waiver, there are procedural shortcuts that a program can implement to ease this requirement for applicants. For example, one program used to require claimants to submit each counseling session bill to private insurance, and have it denied, before it would authorize compensation, even though the bills were submitted by the same therapist for the same diagnosis each time. The program will now accept the insurance company's first statement that mental health benefits are not covered as compliance with the payor of last resort requirement.

The payor of last resort requirement is a potential nightmare for immigrant victims who speak little English and are confused by complex forms. Such victims need someone to help them through the maze of workers' compensation, Medicaid, and private insurance forms. Victim advocates and service providers could assume this role if they are already assisting with the compensation application process. Interviewees recommended that compensation program staff be trained to recognize when help is needed and assist claimants if necessary.

Again, it is critically important for the program to communicate to advocates if it is willing to be flexible about this requirement. Advocates reported advising victims not to apply for compensation if they were hesitant to file for worker's compensation. This was in the same state that said it would be willing to waive the requirement as necessary.

Contributory Misconduct Criteria. The victim's role in the crime is an important element in determining eligibility for compensation. All states consider contributory misconduct – illegal or culpable behavior on the part of the victim at the time of the crime – as part of a claimant's eligibility determination. In some states, this is a two-part investigation: (1) was the victim's behavior at the time of the crime "misconduct," and (2) was the "misconduct" causally connected to³⁷ or did it "contribute" to the occurrence of the crime. In other states, criminal conduct by the victim is grounds for denial even without a causal connection to the crime (NACVCB, 1999). In practice, decisions about contributory misconduct are difficult to make and processes and definitions for making these decisions show limited consensus across states.

The intention of all programs is to compensate only "innocent" or non-culpable victims of crime. Programs must strike the right balance between denying claims of wrongdoers and compensating eligible victims. Some states deny awards entirely if claimants engaged in contributory misconduct, while other states reduce awards in proportion to the extent of misconduct. Generally, state law sets the parameters for assessing contributory misconduct of

³⁷ "The proximate cause of"

the claimant. In homicide cases, the eligibility of the secondary victim is based on the eligibility of the deceased. Thus, if a victim was engaged in criminal activity at the time of his/her death, the surviving family would not be eligible for benefits, including burial expenses and counseling.

Our national survey of state compensation administrators showed that the most frequent *single* reason for non-payment of claims was contributory misconduct, at an average of 28 percent of denials across states. However, there is great variation among the states in how the concept is interpreted. According to the national survey, at least 80 percent of the states would find contributory misconduct when the victim was under the influence of alcohol or engaged in prostitution, but *only if* this behavior had a causal connection to the crime. If the victim was selling illegal drugs, 80 percent of the states would find contributory misconduct *even without* a causal connection to the crime. About 60 percent of the states would assess contribution if the victim was under the influence of illegal drugs or illegally carrying a weapon, but only if causally connected to the crime, while about one-quarter of the states would assess contribution for these behaviors even if not causally connected.

We found that compensation programs in our site visit states often noted changing policies on contributory misconduct as examples of a state's efforts to be more "victim-friendly" and less judgmental. To assure maximum flexibility, these states had no hard and fast rules on contributory misconduct, preferring to review each case individually. Even those states with policy and procedure manuals still viewed them as guides only. This statement from one state's program manual is illustrative:

"These guidelines are based on prior cases . . . and are to be used [to] promote consistency in program determinations. It should be noted that each case has unique circumstances that should be considered in making a contribution determination, and that the decision is in the discretion of the case manager."

Moreover, the site visit states did not feel constrained to rely solely on the police incident report, as most states have in the past. Staff were allowed and even encouraged to get affidavits from the investigators, speak with prosecutors' offices, and get statements from witnesses, as well as from the victim. For a program determined to "err on the side of the victim," a full review of the case, short of a reinvestigation, was considered critical. Difficult cases would be discussed at staff meetings or referred to supervisors or even a board of advisors, depending on the structure of the program. Some programs keep internal records on decisions and refer to these as precedents, in an effort to achieve consistency in decision-making.

Most of the site visit states reported that they must deny a claim if the victim was violating the law and that conduct *contributed to* his/her injuries or death. Clear cases for denial in most states, include: 1) the victim was the aggressor or initiated the altercation; or 2) the victim and offender were in mutual combat. Beyond that, determinations become more difficult. In one possible scenario, a victim seeking compensation was raped while at a crackhouse where she had gone to buy illegal drugs. According to the claims examiners in the state, this victim would have

been automatically denied in the past because the victim put herself into a risky situation where she could have expected trouble. In fact, close to half of this program's denials in recent years were for contributory misconduct. But now this compensation program, like many others, is moving away from making value judgments about victims' lifestyles. Today most programs deny only if the victim's wrongdoing was the proximate cause of the victimization. Thus, they would not deny the rape victim described above, nor would they deny a youth with illegal drugs or a gun in possession who gets hit by a drunk driver, because the illegal act did not contribute to the victimization.

Even if the victim's wrongdoing contributed to his/her injury, programs have discretion to award partial payment if the victim is not seen as wholly culpable. One site visit state described the process as "weighing the seriousness of the victim's conduct against what was done to her." In one example, some young boys stole a man's boat. The boat owner chased the boys out on the lake, caught up with them, and made them jump into freezing water and swim back to shore. When the boys met up with the boat owner on shore, one of them hit him. The boat owner filed for compensation. His claim was denied in part because he had forced the boys to jump into the freezing water.

Another state, which also described itself as "victim oriented," would assess a ten to twenty percent reduction in the award to a drunk driving crash victim where the victim knowingly gets in the car with an intoxicated driver. This type of case would have resulted in full denial for contributory misconduct in the past, and still does in many states.³⁸ Other contributory factors, such as a victim not using a seat belt or driving without a license, insurance, or registration, used to result in a ten percent reduction but are now being phased out by the state legislature.

Clearly, a sea change is occurring in the way programs view victim conduct. But while the programs all condemn "victim blaming," debates continue about whether certain victims, or classes of victims, are "deserving" of government funded compensation benefits. One program, describing itself as "erring on the side of the victim," will always be "tough" on victims of "bar fights." Most programs would concur with an unsympathetic response to drunken brawls. But few if any programs, and certainly few or no advocates, would agree with a denial of counseling expenses for a young woman raped at a fraternity party after she had too much to drink. Similarly, a young drive-by shooting victim's membership in a gang would prompt some programs to deny a claim for his or her funeral expenses. Other programs might pay in full, viewing an inner-city adolescent's gang membership as no more blameworthy than a battered woman who continues to reside with her abusive spouse.

The overall impression from the sampled states is that administrators are struggling with the sensitive issue of contributory misconduct. Programs are attempting to draw distinctions between gang "membership" and gang "activity." Some make exceptions to contributory

³⁸ For example, no award may be ordered in one state to an adult passenger in the offender's vehicle if the passenger knew the offender was under the influence of an intoxicant or controlled substance.

misconduct rules for minor victims and mentally incompetent victims. And many are looking beyond the police report, particularly if there is any hint of victim stereotyping, such as unsubstantiated notations that the victim was “involved in drug sales” or “part of a gang dispute.” Compensation programs have identified cases where law enforcement investigators assumed illegal activity by the type of clothes worn by the victim or the street corner where he/she was shot. A careful claims examiner would recognize these cases and give them proper consideration.

Denials for contributory misconduct are particularly troubling for survivors of homicide victims, who may discover for the first time that a loved one was involved in criminal conduct. One state has begun having “consultative sessions” in which compensation staff and victim advocates meet personally with survivors of homicide victims whose claims are being denied for contributory misconduct, specifically illegal behavior which was causally linked to the homicide. The goal is to discuss the circumstances of the death, provide the claimant an opportunity to provide further information, and discuss the reasons for the denial. This program has recommended legislation to permit these homicide survivors to receive counseling benefits in spite of the contributory misconduct of the primary victim.

Finally, victim advocates have voiced concerns that an alleged offender might use a program’s contributory misconduct decision in his/her criminal defense. For example, a compensation program’s denial of a rape or assault victim’s claim because of provocation might be detrimental to the prosecution. Alternatively, a compensation program’s finding of no contributory misconduct might not be welcome in court by the defense. These possibilities highlight the importance of preserving the confidentiality of compensation records, as provided in OVC guidelines and state programs’ policies.

Appeals

The final step in claims processing and decision-making is the appeal. All states have formal appeals processes for claimants unhappy with the determination made in their case. Almost one-fourth of all claims denied or determined ineligible are appealed nationwide. About 25 percent of these appeals lead to reversals. The site visit states varied considerably in the percentage of claims appealed – from less than one percent to 50 percent of denied claims. An unusually high percentage of claims appealed might signal problems in the decision-making process, particularly if a large percentage of appealed decisions are reversed at this level.

Claims denied for contributory misconduct are by far the most likely to be appealed nationwide. In site visit states we also found that a substantial percentage of appeals were for denials based on “lack of evidence of a crime,” and “failure to cooperate.” One state had a large number of claims denied for “incomplete paperwork” and “expenses paid by collateral sources.”³⁹ This state had a very low appeal rate, less than 5 percent, possibly because the

³⁹ Note again that some programs would count claims paid by collateral sources as “claims awarded with no payment.” Even if an eligible claimant has no bills at first, some programs issue an “award” letter. This procedure

claimants had no outstanding bills to pay or had abandoned their claims before submitting all documentation. Another state had almost exactly the same number of denials but saw about half of those appealed. Again, one cannot evaluate the program's service to victims based on these numbers. The second program may have had a high appeal rate because the majority of its denials were for more controversial reasons, e.g., failure to cooperate and contributory misconduct. A low appeals rate might mean that claimants were generally satisfied with the decision in their cases and/or recognized that their claims were ineligible. On the other hand, if a large number were denied for failing to complete paperwork, the claimants may have "given up" on a bureaucratic program with burdensome requirements.

The NACVCB Program Standards focus on process rather than numerical goals. The program's handling of appeals -- the fairness and speed of the process -- can be a significant indication of how well the program serves its clients. NACVCB recommends that programs notify applicants about decisions in an effective and sensible manner, informing them of their right to appeal. We gathered information on several points relevant to "fairness and speed" including how the claimant is notified about the appeals process; time allowed for filing an appeal; whether the claimant is afforded an opportunity to appear in person; and how adversarial the process is.

We also heard from several states about feedback given from the appeals board or officer to the claims processing staff. Such feedback is important from a management perspective, particularly if many decisions of the claims staff are being reversed at the appellate level.

Claimants are typically notified about the appeals process in writing at the time their claim is denied. They are generally given 30 days to file an appeal. If the claimant submits new information in support of the claim, the claims staff reviews it and may reverse the initial decision. Victim advocates stressed the importance of providing assistance to victims during this time, particularly if they are facing financial uncertainty and need continuing medical or mental health services. Victim assistance staff located within one compensation program have begun calling claimants to talk with them about the appeals process, offering to help with additional documentation, and even representing the claimant if the appeal should proceed to a hearing. If a program does not have in-house victim assistance, copies of denial letters and information about appeals should be sent to victim advocates and service providers who referred the claimant to compensation in the first instance, as well as to claimants.

In smaller programs, the administrator or board in charge of appeals decisions can discuss the case with the claims specialist who made the initial determination. This informal review procedure is used in many states. As the staff and administrator/board work through case after case, they develop some consistency in decision-making. Frequently the administrator or board

keeps the claim file in the system in case eligible expenses are incurred later, e.g., sexual assault victims who have no physical injuries or lost wages initially, but who may have counseling expenses in the future.

is asked for advice on difficult cases before the initial determination letter is sent out. One state reported that the administrator has overturned the staff decision in a handful of cases.

Larger programs must have a more formal appeal procedure; some have special employee units to review decisions and prepare materials for the appeals officer or board. Victims can appear in person or simply send a written appeal. Several programs stated that victims have a much better chance of succeeding on an appeal if they appear to present their case in person. In some states they may bring an attorney or victim advocate to the hearing. But victims are not told as a matter of course that their presence is important for a reversal. Moreover, attending a hearing may be burdensome for the claimant, depending on the location of the hearing and whether the claimant must miss work to appear.

Several states reported that victims can make a final appeal to the state courts. This is rarely done. Adversarial formal hearings before administrative boards are also infrequent but are available to claimants in many states.

As noted earlier, delays in decision-making are difficult for victims and providers waiting to be paid. While victims must file an appeal within 30 days, several programs place no time constraint on the administrator or board reviewing the case. Thus claimants could wait weeks before knowing the final outcome. Several states, however, allow claimants who attend hearings to wait for the decision to be rendered that day. States that expedite the hearing process and make it more accessible – e.g., by holding hearings around the state – are providing a better service for victims. One state concluded the appeals process with an exit interview of the claimant, to gather information about how to be more “victim-friendly.” As appeals are relatively infrequent in most states, this self-evaluation would not be especially time-consuming and should be considered by all states. States that have instituted procedures to “help the victim through the process,” have seen a substantial increase in attendance by claimants.

Emergency Awards

Crime victims filing for compensation benefits have pressing financial needs. As most programs take several weeks to months to process claims, states have developed procedures for expediting the most pressing claims. Typically, these are for elderly or poor crime victims who miss work and thus lose wages or who have to pay for unexpected funeral and burial services, or relocation costs, or sometimes just a bus ticket out of town for a victim of domestic abuse. Other immediate expenses include crime scene clean-up, repair of broken locks and windows, replacement of eyeglasses and dental wear, and transportation costs for hospital visits. Nationwide, 83 percent of state administrators reported having a procedure to expedite the processing of claims in an emergency situation. While these procedures vary considerably, they commonly move emergency claims to the top of the pile or short-cut processing requirements like verifications by using telephone or fax communications rather than mailing letters to law enforcement for copies of the police report. Examples from our site visit states are:

- “Victims can apply for emergency awards of up to \$2,000 for lost wages, funeral expenses, or relocation in the case of domestic violence victims. They use a separate emergency award application form which is supposed to be processed in 30 days.”
- “In emergency award cases, such as burial expenses for homicide cases, we take a summary copy of the law enforcement report and the case is moved to the front of the line.”
- “Emergency awards up to \$1000 are available to reimburse victims for out-of-pocket emergency expenses and they take about 4 weeks to process. Minimum orders for claims of \$200 or less are paid directly to victims within 2 days, if there are minimal verification requirements and no indications of contributory misconduct.”

While programs continue to offer the possibility of an emergency award, the actual processing of these claims is admittedly difficult because of the compensation eligibility requirements, need for verifications, and determinations of no contributory misconduct. The vast majority of administrators feel that emergency funds are best handled by local service providers, who can provide immediate access to local resources for food, shelter and transportation needs unhindered by restrictive eligibility requirements. Moreover, some states may not allow reimbursement for these types of expenses. In some it may be more practical and efficient to rely on local providers for immediate service needs like crime scene clean-up and lock repair. One site visit state had a fully developed emergency program to provide 24/7 services on a state-wide basis for clean-up and repair services, along with transportation to hospitals or the morgue, emergency shelter, emergency dental work, and replacement of eyeglasses. Requests are called in by law enforcement officers or by an advocate in a hospital, shelter, rape crisis center, or social services agency. While some showing of victimization is needed, the program does not require law enforcement reporting and cooperation. These services are funded through a VOCA victim assistance grant.

Trends and Recommendations

While it is difficult to compare approval rates across states because of variations in definitions and processing, compensation programs generally have high approval rates (in excess of 70 percent), indicating that they typically receive eligible claims and obtain the documentation necessary to substantiate them (although payments may not always be made). Claims may be denied or declared ineligible because of failure to satisfy a number of program requirements. There is a trend toward making these requirements more flexible to better serve victims. As programs continue to emphasize expansion to serve more victims and serve them more completely, it will be important for a number of points to be examined:

- There is a trend toward loosening law enforcement reporting and cooperation requirements, including extensions of deadlines and expansions of notions of appropriate authorities for taking reports (e.g., civil protection orders rather than police reports for domestic violence victims, child protection agencies for child

abuse victims). In addition, claim filing deadlines are being extended or abolished. It should be useful to track the numbers of new claims resulting from these changes, so that programs can monitor whether these are successful strategies for reaching additional victims, whether program resources can respond to any influx of large numbers of claims due to these changes, and whether these claims can be verified and approved. Any problems in any of these areas would need to be identified and addressed if programs are to meet their goals of serving victims better through these means.

- Programs are also attempting to expand by serving victims of property crimes in limited ways, expanding the definition of eligible victims to include additional types of secondary victims, paying additional types of expenses not traditionally paid, improving policies or procedures for paying traditional types of expenses (such as mental health counseling and lost wages) and raising payment caps or categor sub-caps. Again, these expansions require careful monitoring to assess their success at serving more victims and their effects on programs' functioning and finances, so that policy or procedural changes can be identified and developed as needed.
- Payor of last resort requirements are in place to ensure that compensation funds meet the financial needs of victims with nowhere else to turn, so that compensation can be available for as many victims as possible. While lifting this requirement entirely would probably lead to a speedy financial collapse for many programs, some programs are identifying victims for whom this requirement is particularly problematic and developing flexible ways to meet the victims' needs while protecting the financial stability of the compensation program. Some programs are also streamlining procedures for satisfying this requirement, to ease documentation burdens on claimants, service providers, and collateral payment sources. These trends are encouraging and, again, would benefit from careful monitoring of how policy and procedural changes impact on compensation caseloads and ability to serve victims.
- Contributory misconduct remains a thorny issue requiring extensive information on the crime and careful judgments by program staff. Programs report more efforts to collect comprehensive information on the circumstances of the crime, rather than relying on only police reports or "victim profiling" (for example, if the victim was wearing gang colors he was a gang member and probably engaged in illegal behavior). They are also drawing on more victim-oriented, less victim-blaming philosophies. While these are often judgment calls that must be made on a case-by-case basis, it can be useful to employ general guidelines and maintain information on the circumstances and decisions made in these cases, to promote fairness and consistency. Some advocates have suggested interpreting contributory misconduct in innovative ways to allow needs of innocent secondary victims to be met better. For example, if homicide survivors' eligibility is based on their own conduct rather than the victims', they can receive assistance with funeral expenses and counseling services that may be desperately needed in the aftermath of losing a loved one and learning that he or she was engaged in illegal or otherwise culpable behavior. At least one compensation program reports special efforts to interact with homicide

survivors in a sensitive and respectful fashion through one-on-one information sessions.

- Appeals options are available to claimants unhappy with the program’s decision, and the extent to which appeals are filed varies a good deal across states. Appeals processes are considered to function well if they allow the claimant a reasonable amount of time (e.g., 30 days) to file an appeal, encourage claimants to seek the support and assistance of victim advocates during the process, allow the claimant to appear at the hearing if he or she wishes to do so, hold hearings at times and locations that are convenient to claimants, render decisions in a timely manner (e.g., within a week or two, if not sooner), and hold exit interviews with appellants to get feedback on the useability of the process from the client’s perspective.
- Most states have developed policies and procedures to expedite claims processing in emergency situations. These may be limited to certain types of claims, such as those without possible contributory misconduct issues, because of the need to apply program requirements while still effecting speedy processing. To work most effectively, emergency processing may need claims staff dedicated to this function, or staff whose workloads do not prohibit flexibility and quick responses to emergency situations. Alternatively, emergency awards may be best handled through locally-based direct service providers who have better access to victims and those who can meet victims’ needs, and are not constrained by requirements such as police reporting and detailed verification procedures.
- It is worth noting again that as compensation programs modify their policies and practices, it is extremely important to communicate these changes to those who work directly with victims, especially victim advocates. Advocates need current information to do effective pre-screening and claim assistance, and they need close communication with compensation programs to help them track progress on submitted claims.
- It also bears repeating that as requirements are relaxed and criteria expanded, there should be more demand for compensation funds and for administrative activities to run programs effectively. Significantly more funds for paying claims will be available beginning in 2003, but administrative support will not increase a great deal. Programs that have not made full use of the administrative allowance may feel an increased need to do so, and other programs may need administrative support from other sources.

Underserved Populations

“If victims don’t know about compensation, they can’t obtain it.” NACVCB Programs Standards

According to the nationwide survey of compensation administrators, many potentially eligible victims do not apply for compensation. Eighty-one percent of administrators, including five of the six site visit states, feel that they receive too few claims, based on the crime statistics in their state. They identified certain categories of crime victims who they believe are underserved (i.e., they apply for compensation less frequently than expected based on known

victimization rates). More than half of the survey respondents identified victims of domestic violence, elder abuse, adult sexual assault, and child sexual abuse as potentially under-utilizing the compensation program. Non-English speakers and residents of remote or rural areas were also high on the list of groups underutilizing victim compensation. On our site visits, we asked service providers about these groups⁴⁰ and why they might not be fully utilizing the compensation program.

We found that victims may be deterred from applying for compensation because of law enforcement reporting and cooperation requirements, time limits for filing, and complex paperwork. For example:

- “Most of our elderly clients do not report to the police. The elderly are often intimidated by the prospect of filling out applications. The language is too complex. When they get an official letter back (even if it is just an acknowledgment letter from the program) they get scared and think they are either in trouble or have to do something. The letter should be clear and say directly if they don’t have to take any action. The letter and application should also be in large print for the elderly.”
- “The reporting requirement is a barrier for domestic violence victims. Often they do not want to file a report, there is not a single incident for them to report, and many do not even see it as a crime for which they could get compensation. Stalking victims sometimes do not know who is stalking them to report to the police or there is not enough evidence for the police to take a report.”
- “A big obstacle to compensation for sexual assault victims is the need to report the crime to the police within five days and the requirement that a claim be made within a year.”
- “The state compensation program will not consider applications if the rape is not reported within 48 hours. This makes no sense as the law gives 72 hours to do a forensic exam. So why not at least 72 for comp?”
- “The growing Hispanic population may be having difficulties with comp. As comp is the payer of last resort, non-English speaking victims need someone to help them through the maze of worker’s compensation, private insurance, and Medicaid.”
- “Abused Asian women are less likely than the general population to contact the police, because of fear of deportation, the anti-immigrant attitude of law enforcement, and the Asian women’s misunderstanding of the role of the criminal justice system.”

Moreover many victims, of all crime types and demographics, simply do not know about compensation. Even though the NACVCB and OVC admonish the programs to “get the word

⁴⁰ Several interviewees noted that drunk driving crash victims may put in relatively few claims because insurance coverage is generally high in automobile cases. Moreover, these victims’ awareness of compensation may be limited, because many offenders are killed and the case doesn’t make it to the prosecutor’s office, where compensation information and assistance is often most available.

out,” programs often cannot find the time and resources for outreach and communication. Site visit programs provided some insight into current efforts to reach more victims, both directly and through providers who work with victims.

Direct Advertising. Study states reported using billboards (in English and Spanish), 1-800 numbers, posters, internet sites, and even Band-Aid dispensers with the 1-800 number on it. Several administrators and providers felt that outreach to the general public was not particularly effective, as individuals tended not to pay attention to the information until they needed it. Most would have to be reached if, and when, they become a crime victim. On the other hand, direct personal calls to victims in cases reported in the media was considered an effective outreach method.

Encouraging Referrals. Crime victims typically apply for compensation after first speaking about the crime with some other professional – law enforcement officers, prosecutors, victim advocates, health care providers, social workers, shelters, teachers, clergy, funeral directors, and so on. Program administrators believe that the most effective outreach is to encourage referrals from professionals who come into contact with crime victims. Like programs nationwide, site visit states sent claim forms and materials to prosecutor’s offices, law enforcement agencies, and VOCA-funded victim service providers. Some spoke of expanding outreach to allied professionals, such as hospitals, emergency clinics, and social service agencies. Administrators candidly recognized that *effective* outreach requires better communication, letters explaining the importance of compensation, regular newsletters or updates explaining changes in the law, and current on-line information about the program. Some programs admitted that outreach had not been a priority in past years, and they hoped to do more. Even the best efforts, however, did not always guarantee proper referrals:

- “Ninety percent of our cases come from the prosecutor’s offices. When a violent crime case comes in, the victim advocate in the office is supposed to call the victim and tell her about her rights and the availability of compensation. The call is followed by a letter, a brochure about compensation, and an application. This is ideal. It doesn’t always happen. It would be even better if the advocate had time to sit down with the victim and get the forms and papers together for compensation. Most don’t.”
- “We’ve made out cards about compensation for law enforcement victim advocates to give to victims. They are required by state law to inform victims about compensation, but they have too many responsibilities and this gets lost in the crush of events.”
- “Sometimes the prosecutor’s office uses its victim-witness staff for clerical functions rather than true victim services. Then we have to rely on nonprofit advocates to get involved.”
- “Lots of hospital counselors do not know about compensation.”
- “Hospital staff constantly need retraining and hospitals usually send in the worst applications. They batch the bills which bogs down the process.”

Sometimes there are multiple shortcomings in communications and training that may explain why certain classes of victims underutilize the compensation program.

- “I (*member of compensation staff*) was not aware that VOCA-funded shelters are required to inform victims about compensation. We don’t hear a lot from them.”
- “We (*domestic violence advocacy group*) could be doing a better job making sure compensation information gets to victims. I think comp gets lost in the shuffle. I’ve never seen an application and don’t know what the filing requirements are.”
- “We (*domestic violence service program*) could do a better job if we had some training about compensation and some easy to read brochures to put in the lobby. But we’ve never asked for them.”
- “Many domestic violence programs thought that their clients were not eligible, even though they are if they report to law enforcement.” (*from a state-wide umbrella organization for domestic violence programs*)

If funding and time were available, the best outreach would include intensive training of service providers and other professionals. Several programs have invested in special departments dedicated to outreach and have reached large numbers of professionals who serve victims in various capacities.

- “Training improves the quality of applications. We’re working on a pre-filing checklist to help advocates screen for statutory eligibility.”
- “We started holding regional training sessions after a survey of the field revealed that over half of professionals wanted training on compensation. Our goal is to increase awareness of compensation and numbers of claims received. We’re training professionals from law enforcement, the judiciary, corrections, health care, social services, funeral homes, coroners offices, and community-based organizations. Topics include eligibility criteria and the application process.”
- “Meetings of associations of coroners, funeral directors, chiefs of police, domestic violence advocates, MADD, and crime prevention offices are good opportunities for training.”
- “We prepared an eight-minute roll call training tape for law enforcement, because they have such limited training time. The tape has also been used by probation and parole departments.”
- “Written guides for victim advocates and clear application forms and instructions make a big difference. We need to walk them through the process.”
- “Allowing service providers to track claims electronically is an incentive for them. We would like to develop a way to allow them to file claims electronically.”

Trends and Recommendations

This report only scratches at the surface of the issue of underserved populations; much more needs to be learned about who they are and why they are underserved. Based on current knowledge, next steps may include:

- An in-depth analysis of what populations are underserved and why. Since states vary a good deal on population demographics and topography (i.e., rural, mountainous, or other hard-to-reach areas), this should probably be done at the state level by programs concerned with this issue, with the input of advocates, other service providers, and victims themselves.
- When compensation requirements are a barrier, they should be reviewed to see if they can be altered in ways to make them less of an obstacle for sub-groups of victims. Much work of this nature is already underway, as noted in the section on compensation outcomes.
- Once again the need for close communication and coordination between compensation programs and direct service providers (victim advocates, law enforcement, prosecutors, healthcare providers, social services, schools, and many more) is highlighted. These are the people who have direct contact with many victims, and victims may never learn of compensation if these providers don't know about it, believe in it, and have the means to help victims with the process (e.g., forms, brochures, access to the compensation program).
- And again we see the need for compensation programs to have the necessary resources (funding, staffing, automation, and so on) to invest in outreach and coordination with service providers.
- As population demographics continue to change in almost all states, programs must make materials easier to read and available in Spanish and other languages as appropriate. Someone should be available on or to the compensation staff to assist non-English speaking claimants. Training in cultural sensitivity is also very important so staff can interact with claimants in an appropriate manner, and policies or procedures which are sensitive to cultural issues can be developed.

THE CLIENTS' PERSPECTIVE: A SIX-STATE SURVEY OF COMPENSATION CLAIMANTS

To complement the information obtained from program staff and administrators, members of oversight bodies, and victim advocates, we also conducted a telephone survey of 452 people who had applied for compensation in the six site visit states.⁴¹ The goal of the survey was to get program clients' feedback on the claims process and outcome, and to develop recommendations for ways to make program policies or operations more responsive to clients' needs and perspectives. Specifically, we explored the following areas:

⁴¹ The obtained sample size is 90% of the target sample size of 500. Claimants from each of the six states participated, with 68 to 81 claimants per state.

- Who claims victim compensation, in terms of type of crime and personal demographics
- The need for compensation, including expenses incurred by the crime, expenses for which compensation is claimed, and expenses borne by the claimants
- How claimants learn about victim compensation: who informs them and in how timely a manner
- The claims process, including assistance with the process, application procedures and requirements, and processing time
- Outcome of the claim, including payments, reasons for denials, and appeals processes
- Overall perceptions of the compensation program and what factors are associated with these perceptions
- Recommendations for improvements in policy and practice

After a summary in the next section, we describe how we selected the sample of claimants, characteristics of those who claimed compensation, findings from analyses of their responses to the survey questions, and recommendations for improvements to compensation policy and practice. The survey instrument is presented in Appendix E, along with descriptive statistics on each of the survey items. The survey took an average of 15 to 20 minutes, and we paid participants \$10 in token of our appreciation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

To briefly summarize the major findings and their implications in each of the key areas:

- Who claims compensation?

Findings: The claims in our survey sample represented a broad variety of types of crimes and claimant and victim demographics. Analyses comparing proportions of claims with victimization statistics showed that claims for homicide and sexual assault may be disproportionately likely while physical assault may be underrepresented on claimant rolls (given the prevalence of these crimes among violent crimes in general). These patterns may be due to a disproportionate likelihood of victims incurring expenses from these crimes (homicide and sexual assault victims may be more likely to incur expenses, assaults – especially simple assaults, which are the most common form of assault – may be less likely to produce expenses). Robbery is claimed at a rate quite similar to its prevalence among various types of violent crime. Both claimants and victims in the claims (these are often different people) are likely to be older, more often female, and more often white than crime victims in general. Claims for intimate partner violence seem to be well-represented among claims in general, as do claims for gun-related crimes.

Implications: Compensation programs may wish to take a closer look at what factors may be contributing to the apparent underuse of compensation by victims of assault, younger victims,

minority victims, and male victims. It is possible that eligibility criteria may account for these patterns, and these criteria may or may not be amenable to changes designed to reach more of these victims. It is also possible that outreach to these groups could be improved to increase their representation among claims.

- What is the need for compensation?

Findings: Claimants generally reported incurring the types of expenses which are eligible for compensation and making claims for those expenses. However, some claimants reporting incurring eligible types of expenses for which they did *not* file claims. Even after considering compensation and other sources of recompense, two-thirds of surveyed claimants still sustained a median of \$600 in unrecovered losses (despite a claim approval rate near 90 percent). These losses were often from allowable expenses (such as medical costs, lost wages, and transportation expenses), but were also sometimes a result of expenses for which compensation is very restricted (property loss or replacement).

Implications: Further research should examine why claimants sometimes do not file claims for expenses they incurred that are eligible for compensation, to identify whether policy changes and/or better education about compensation could help to serve victims more completely. Similarly, a careful consideration of how eligibility criteria could be expanded to cover more of victims' expenses may be in order. For example, how could property-related losses be covered more completely, while still maintaining compensation programs' financial stability?

- Learning about compensation

Findings: Claimants are most likely to learn about compensation from victim service programs, the police, or prosecutors. While these are very important sources of information and referral, some victims who may be eligible for compensation may not contact any of these sources (particularly as programs relax police reporting requirements). Claimants generally report learning about compensation in a timely manner. It should be noted that victims who did not claim compensation and so were not included in this survey may have been considerably less likely to learn about compensation or to learn about it in a timely manner.

Implications: Compensation programs may be able to reach a wider variety of victims by expanding training and outreach to providers who contact victims but may not be well acquainted with compensation. Medical providers would seem to be a prime audience for these efforts.

- The claim process

Findings: About half of the claimants in our survey reported receiving assistance with the claim process, most often by victim service providers. These providers offered a broad range of different types of help. Friends and relatives were a more common source of assistance than the police or compensation program staff. While close to half the claimants reported no help with the process, few claimants reported needing help they did not receive. Program documentation

requirements did not seem to present insurmountable barriers to claimants, as most of them were able to provide needed documents, and in many claims it seems very likely the compensation programs made documentation requests from others than the claimant (such as victim service providers, the police, and providers of services for which expenses were incurred). It is also possible that programs did not always make requests for needed documentation, although the high approval rate argues to the contrary. Claim processing time (from filing to determination) averaged ten weeks, which falls within recommended timeframes.

Implications: Despite the fact that most claimants were satisfied with the help they received, those who did not receive assistance (or received assistance from friends and relatives who may know no more about compensation than they do) may not have become sufficiently well-informed about compensation to realize that they would have benefited from additional assistance (particularly given the extent to which claimants with approved claims still bore not insignificant crime-related expenses). Clearly, many victims who did not apply for compensation may not have done so because they did not receive the assistance they needed (although this question could not be addressed in the current survey). Outreach, training, and support to encourage victim service providers, police, medical providers, and compensation program staff to work more closely with claimants should be beneficial to victims and help compensation programs further their mission of serving client needs. Compensation programs should be recognized for their successful efforts to speed case processing, and continue to strive for ways to shorten the time even further.

- The claim outcome

Findings: Claim approval rates were high in the survey sample at 87 percent, and at least some claimed expenses had in fact been paid for about two-thirds of the surveyed claimants. However, when claims are denied there seem to be barriers in effectively conveying information about denial reasons and appeal options to claimants, in that many claimants with denials did not report being given reasons for the denial.

Implications: It is important for claimants to have a full understanding of the claim outcome so they can make an informed decision about options following a denial. Compensation programs may wish to examine their methods of informing victims about reasons for claim denials (in whole or in part) and appeals options. It is possible that information does not reach the claimant (perhaps compensation programs are more likely to communicate directly with victim service providers or others who referred the victim to compensation), or that claimants do not understand the information provided.

- Perceptions of the compensation experience

Findings: On the whole, surveyed claimants were quite satisfied with the compensation experience, including the application process and outcome and program requirements. Nearly all claimants felt the application was easy to fill out and not too time-consuming, but over one-quarter felt the documentation requirements were burdensome. About three-quarters of the

claimants felt the determination was fair and reasonable, and the claim was paid in a reasonable amount of time. Conversely, just over one-quarter said the amount of time it took to receive payment was problematic. Police reporting requirements were not an issue for these claimants (non-claimants may feel differently), but nearly one-quarter of the claimants would have preferred not to make an insurance claim for their crime-related expenses. The most common suggestion for program improvements centered around publicizing the program more and providing better explanations of procedures and options. Claimants with the most positive perceptions of the compensation experience were those whose claims were processed more quickly, who had more claimed expenses paid, and claimants who were female and white (independent of any other factors that may also be associated with sex and race).

Implications: To increase client satisfaction, compensation programs should continue to emphasize improvements in claim processing time and ease of the process for claimants (e.g., reducing documentation burdens by more proactive steps to obtain needed verifications). Programs may wish to explore why female claimants and white claimants have more positive perceptions of compensation than men and minorities, and identify whether any policy or procedural changes may be necessary to make the program work better for these groups.

The Survey Sample

Sampling Strategy

Our goal in selecting the survey sample was to include a broadly representative mix of claimants. We wanted to hear from claimants who were direct victims of crime as well as those who applied on behalf of deceased, minor, or other incapacitated victims; claimants who had experienced a variety of different types of crime; those whose claims were approved⁴² and those whose claims were denied; and claimants representing diverse age, sex, and racial/ethnic groups. The purpose of this sampling strategy was to assure that our findings would apply to claimants in general, rather than to just some particular subset of claimants.

It was important to get data on claimants' perceptions of the outcome of the claim process, so we sampled at the point of claim determination.⁴³ We asked compensation program staff in each of the six states to generate a list of 200 to 250 recently determined claims as of the time the samples were drawn (from late 1999 to mid-2000 across the six states).⁴⁴ We asked for recently determined claims in the expectation that claimants with more recent cases would have

⁴² Because states use different definitions of approval, in some cases this may mean a claim has been paid, and in others it may mean the claim has been approved for payment but no payments have yet been made (pending receipt of bills, for example).

⁴³ States define determination in different ways, but generally this means the decision to approve a claim for payment (at that time or in the future when payable expenses are submitted) or deny it (or declare it ineligible).

⁴⁴ For the five states that provided determination dates, claims for 83% of the survey participants were determined during the years the samples were drawn (1999 and 2000). Another 14% of the claims were determined in 1998, and 2% were determined in 1995, 1996, or 1997.

fresher memories of the claims process and outcome.⁴⁵ These were the only sampling criteria used.

Representativeness of the Survey Sample. We conducted analyses to determine how representative our 452 survey participants were of the larger group of claims sampled from program records but not included in the survey. We also compared characteristics of our survey sample with year 2000 state-wide data reported by these six states to OVC, and with nation-wide compensation data compiled by OVC for 1998. See Appendix F for a detailed discussion of the sampling and surveying processes, and methodological analyses assessing the representativeness of the survey sample.

These analyses indicate that, on the whole, our sample seems to be representative of compensation claims at large. Case-level analyses found no differences between surveyed and sampled but non-surveyed claims on a number of crime, claim processing and outcome, and victim demographic variables. Aggregate-level comparisons of surveyed claims with all claims for the six states in 2000, and all claims across the nation in 1998, indicate that surveyed claims were processed more quickly (primarily in comparison with the 1998 data) and payment amounts were lower than for claims in general. Approval rates were higher for the surveyed claims than for 1998 claims, but not for 2000 claims. The differences on case processing time and approval rates seem likely a result of using somewhat dated comparison statistics in a climate of rapid program changes. Payment amounts were likely lower for the surveyed claims because we purposely sampled recently determined claims, for which complete payment data may not always have been available.

Limitations of the Sampling Method. While the strength of this sampling method is its applicability to the broad range of claimants, it should be noted that the findings apply to *compensation claimants only*. Since we did not include victims who did not apply for compensation, we cannot provide answers to questions about why some victims do not submit claims or who these victims are. While these are very important questions, it was necessary in this survey to focus on our principle area of interest, claimants' perceptions of the claims experience. The survey of victims who received services from VOCA-funded assistance programs — the last phase of research for this evaluation, to be included in the final evaluation report — will provide some information of this type from victims who do not apply for compensation.

Data from Compensation Programs' Databases

In addition to claimants' names and contact information, the compensation programs also provided us with information on other key characteristics of the claim, as available. We got this information from the compensation program so we would not have to ask claimants for

⁴⁵ The median lapse of time from the claim determination date to the date the survey was conducted for each claim was almost eight months. This lapse ranged from 12 days to over five years, with 90% of the claims determined within two years of the survey date.

information they had already provided to the program, and so that we could analyze characteristics of claimants who did not participate in the phone survey. While not all data were available in all states, the types of information we received from the states included:

- *Characteristics of the crime, claimant, and victim:* type of crime (e.g., homicide, drunk driving crash, assault, other violent crime, etc.); whether the claimant was the direct victim and, if not, relationship between claimant and victim; and claimant's and victim's age, race, and sex.
- *Characteristics of the claim:* referral organization, processing time, determination made (approval or denial), reasons for denial, and payments made.

Some of the states did not provide case-level data on some of these variables. For example, one state did not provide information on payments made, and another did not provide the date of determination (needed to compute case processing time). Since all states need these data to complete annual performance reports to OVC, we assume this was either an oversight in compiling data for the survey sample, or these data are kept in a different fashion and were not readily retrievable on a case-by-case basis. These cases were omitted from analyses involving these particular variables, as necessary.

Analyses of program-supplied data are presented along with analyses of data provided by claimants in the phone survey, in each of the following sections focusing on a given topic area. The telephone survey is presented in Appendix E, with frequencies and percentages for each item inserted in the survey form. Findings from these and other analyses are presented in the discussion below.

Who Claims Compensation?

There has been considerable speculation but little solid evidence on how widely victims have accessed compensation. Concerns have been expressed that victims of some types of crimes, or victims with certain demographic characteristics, are underserved by compensation programs. Since these questions may have important policy implications and this is the first broad-based analysis of compensation claimants, we begin with a detailed look at who claims compensation.

Types of Crimes for Which Claims Were Filed

The priority for use of federal compensation funds is victims of violent crime, although victims of property crimes may access compensation in more limited ways. Table 1 shows the distribution of our survey sample across various types of crime.

Table 3: Types of Crime Represented in Survey Sample

<i>Crime Type</i>	<i>Number in Sample</i>	<i>Percentage of Total (452)</i>
Homicide	31	7%
Manslaughter and other fatalities (negligent, reckless, and vehicular)	13	3%
Attempted murder, arson, kidnapping, terrorism	10	2%
Physical assault	185	43%
Sexual assault	126	29%
Stalking, threats	6	1%
DUI and other vehicular (apparently non-fatal)	23	5%
Robbery	29	7%
Burglary, theft, other property crimes	12	3%

Representativeness of Crime Types in Claimant Survey Sample. There have been concerns that victims of some types of crime may under-utilize compensation programs because of compensation eligibility criteria (e.g., police reporting requirements) and other factors. Assuming that claimants who participated in our survey are generally representative of claimants at large, we can compare our survey data with national victimization statistics to shed some light on these concerns.

Two sources of national statistics on violent crime are available. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) issues Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) each year on all crimes reported to law enforcement authorities.⁴⁶ The other source is the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which is a bi-annual randomly-selected household survey conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).⁴⁷

Since the NCVS data include crimes not reported to law enforcement, we compare characteristics of our sample with NCVS data to assess how well victims of different types of violent crime are represented on claimant rolls. We supplement these data with UCR data on murder, since the NCVS does not measure this type of crime (while the UCR data only include crimes reported to law enforcement, virtually all murders are reported, so this limitation is negligible for this particular type of crime).

UCR statistics indicate that murder and non-negligent manslaughter comprise about one percent of all reported violent crime (www.fbi.gov/ucr). Seven percent of our surveyed claims

⁴⁶ The UCR defines violent crime to include murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. One disadvantage of this source is that only crimes reported to law enforcement are included, and it has been estimated that nearly half of violent crimes are not reported (Rennison, 2001). Additionally, certain crimes which are eligible for compensation are not included in the UCR definition of violent crime, such as simple assault (which comprises nearly two-thirds of all violent crime when included in the definition – Rennison, 2001) and drunk driving crashes.

were for homicide and another three percent were for manslaughter and other criminal fatalities, indicating that survivors of these crimes may be quite likely to access compensation. This is not surprising, since murder nearly always produces at least funeral and burial expenses.

NCVS data on violent crime include only physical assault, sexual assault, and robbery of persons age 12 and older. According to this source, physical assault (aggravated and simple) comprises 83 percent of all violent crime; sexual assault represents five percent of all violent crime; and robbery contributes another 11 percent (Rennison, 2001). When we apply the same definition of violent crime and the same age restrictions to our survey sample – thus including only these three crime types and limiting the analysis to cases with a victim age 12 or older – we are left with 288 cases, or 64 percent of the total sample. Considering only these 288 cases, 60 percent of our claims were for physical assault (of varying degrees of severity); 30 percent were for sexual assault; and ten percent were for robbery.

It thus appears that the proportion of claims which are for robbery is quite similar to the proportion of violent crime which is robbery, that claims for sexual assault are over-represented among claims for violent crime as defined by the NCVS, and that claims for physical assault, while accounting for the majority of claims, are still under-represented when considering the prevalence at which physical assaults occur. It is possible that physical assaults may be less likely than expected to result in claims because simple assaults account for 64 percent of all violent crime according to NCVS definitions and data, and 79 percent of all simple assaults cause no injury (Rennison, 2001). Simple assaults may thus result in few or no financial consequences eligible for compensation, such as injury requiring treatment. Sexual assault, on the other hand, virtually always requires at least a medical exam. Compensation programs pay other expenses often caused by sexual assault as well, such as medical and mental health treatment.

Claimants' Demographic Characteristics

We asked claimants their age, sex, race, and source of income (questions # 37, 39, 41, and 43), to get a snapshot of who participated in our survey. To the extent that our survey respondents are representative of all claimants in general, these data also provide some insight as to who applies for compensation. Table 4 presents these findings.

⁴⁷ The NCVS defines violent crime to include rape/sexual assault, robbery, and both aggravated and simple assault. Murder and drunk driving crashes are not included, nor are crimes against victims under 12 years old (which of course means that child abuse is seriously underestimated).

Table 4: Demographic Characteristics of Claimants in Survey Sample

Age:	
Average	42
Median	40
Range	18-92 (18 is the minimum age for claimants)
Sex:	
Male	30%
Female	70%
Race:	
White	73%
Black	16%
Hispanic	8%
Asian, Native American, other	3%
Income source:	
Own or others' employment	79%
Government assistance	20%

These statistics show that claimants tend to be well into adulthood; that most claimants in our sample are female; that racial groups approximately mirror the general population; and that many claimants depend on government assistance as their main source of income. The findings on age, sex, and race are not in line with typical victim statistics (Rennison, 2001, found that victims are disproportionately teenagers, males, and Black) but may reflect who accesses compensation. Assuming that claimants who relied on government assistance for income had lower income levels than those who relied on employment income, our sample would seem to reflect the general pattern that crime victims tend to have lower incomes than the population at large (Rennison, 2001). The finding on income is not surprising, since compensation is the payer of last resort and can be expected to serve many lower-income, uninsured claimants.

Victims' Demographic Characteristics

It is of considerable interest to assess the characteristics of victims who access compensation, and compare them with the characteristics of victims in general. The national survey of compensation administrators found that many believed that some victim groups are underserved by compensation, such as racial minorities.

For 274 (61 percent) of the claims we sampled, the claimant was also the direct or primary victim of the crime. The other 178 claimants⁴⁸ applied on behalf of a deceased, minor, or incapacitated victim. For these cases, we collected information on the victims' demographics

⁴⁸ These claimants were overwhelmingly the victims' mothers: 81 percent were the victim's parent or parent figure, and 85 percent were women.

from the survey (questions # 38, 40, 42, and 44). Using the victims' demographic data for these 178 cases in conjunction with the 274 victim/claimants' demographics (when the claimant and victim were the same person), we have a profile of victims of crime who access compensation, or on whose behalf compensation is claimed (Table 5).

Table 5: Victim Characteristics for Claims in Survey Sample

Age:	
Average	33
Median	27
Range	1-92
Minors (under 18)	24% of total sample
NCVS categories:	
12-15	7% of victims age 12 and older
16-19	15% of victims age 12 and older
20-24	15% of victims age 12 and older
25-34	19% of victims age 12 and older
35-49	22% of victims age 12 and older
50-64	12% of victims age 12 and older
65+	10% of victims age 12 and older
Sex:	
Male	40%
Female	60%
Race:	
White	71%
Black	16%
Hispanic	8%
Asian, Native American, other	3%
Income source:	
Own or others' employment	80%
Government assistance	18%

Representativeness of Victim Demographics. Comparing these data with NCVS statistics on victim demographics reveals that our sample is older, more female, and less likely to belong to a racial or ethnic minority group than crime victims in general. To the extent that our survey sample represents claimants in general, this may indicate that claimants may not be representative of victims in general, at least on these demographic characteristics. A number of factors may account for this, from eligibility criteria to outreach strategies.

From NCVS data, over 70 percent of victims age 12 and older are between the ages of 12 and 24; in our sample, only 37 percent of victims age 12 and older fall into these categories. The age groups most commonly represented in our claimant sample are adults age 25 to 49, at 41 percent of those 12 and over. Only 23 percent of victims fall into these categories according to

NCVS estimates. Victims age 50 and over account for 22 percent of our sample of those over 12, but only 7 percent of victims in general (Rennison, 2001).

The NCVS estimates that 59 percent of violent crime victims are males and 41 percent are females (Rennison, 2001). In our sample this representation is almost exactly reversed, with 60 percent females and 40 percent males.

Findings from the NCVS indicate that Whites account for only 24 percent of crime victims, Blacks account for 32 percent, and Asians and Native Americans account for 19 percent of victims age 12 and older (Rennison, 2001). While our data are not directly comparable because of differences in how the Hispanic category was treated (we used a single variable to measure both race and ethnicity, while the NCVS used separate measures of race – as Black, White, or other – and ethnicity – as Hispanic or non-Hispanic), there is clearly a larger proportion of Whites in our sample than in the victim population at large.

Differences in Claims Across Types of Crime

Information on victims' characteristics and aspects of claims processing and outcomes can be compared across the different types of crimes (homicides vs. assaults vs. drunk driving crashes, and so on). These analyses provide more information on who applies for compensation and how programs respond to claims for different types of crime. The findings on victims' characteristics can be compared with national data from the NCVS and the UCR to take a further look at whether some groups of victims may be underserved by compensation. Table 6 summarizes these findings.

Table 6: Characteristics of Surveyed Claims Across Different Types of Crime

Claim Characteristics	Types of Crime				
	Homicide, other fatalities (N=44)	Assault, other serious crimes, stalking, threats (N=201)	Sexual assault (N=126)	Drunk driving crashes, other vehicular crimes (N=23)	Robbery, burglary, theft (N=41)
Victim's sex⁴⁹:					
Male	67%	48%	19%	52%	20%
Female	33%	52%	81%	48%	80%
Victim's race:					
White	56%	75%	76%	57%	75%
Black	26%	14%	14%	14%	18%
Hispanic	16%	8%	7%	19%	3%
Asian	2%	2%	1%	5%	0%
Native American	0%	1%	2%	0%	3%
Victim's average age⁵⁰	33	34	18	35	67
Average processing time in days	68	68	87	78	36
Claim decision⁵¹:					
Approved	88%	89%	91%	68%	78%
Denied	12%	11%	9%	32%	22%
Average payment for cases with payments Made	\$2,666	\$1,481	\$1,361	\$2,888	\$1,210

Victims' Sex by Type of Crime. While victims in surveyed claims stemming from physical assaults and drunk driving crashes were about equally likely to be males as females, victims in claims for homicides were more likely to be males, and victims in claims for sexual assault and robbery, burglary, or theft were much more likely to be females. NCVS data (Rennison, 2001) indicate that males are victims of physical assault at rates about 50 percent higher than for females, which in conjunction with our data on surveyed claims suggests that female assault victims may be more likely than expected to apply for compensation (they may be more likely to sustain injuries from the assault). NCVS data show that females are much more likely to be victims of sexual assault, and our data show they are much more likely to claim compensation (Rennison, 2001). According to UCR data (www.fbi.gov/ucr), males account for about three-quarters of all murder victims, which is a bit more than the two-thirds of male murder victims in our sample of claims, indicating that compensation may be claimed somewhat

⁴⁹ $\chi^2(4)=51.5, p<.001$. This significant statistic indicates that victims' sex is distributed differently for the different types of crime – some crimes are more likely to have male victims, others are more likely to have female victims.

⁵⁰ $F(82, 340) = 3.67, p < .001$. This significant statistic indicates that victims' average ages differ for the different types of crime. Sexual assault victims are clearly the youngest and robbery victims the oldest.

⁵¹ $\chi^2(4)=12.9, p<.02$. This significant statistic indicates that claim decisions are distributed differently for the different types of crime – claims for some types of crime were more likely to be approved than claims for other types.

more often when the murder victim was a female. Finally, female victims of robbery, burglary, or theft seem quite likely to apply for compensation, as females suffer robbery (the most common of these crimes in the survey sample) at less than half the rate of males (Rennison, 2001), but made up 80 percent of our sample of claims for these crimes.

Victims' Race by Type of Crime. Statistical analyses indicated that victims' racial/ethnic group did not vary across type of crime. Most victims in each crime type were White, ranging from 56 percent (for homicide) to 76 percent (for sexual assault). Blacks made up the second-largest racial group across crimes, followed by Hispanics (except for drunk driving crashes, in which Hispanic victims were more prevalent than Black victims). Comparisons with national victimization data show that White victims are disproportionately overrepresented among surveyed claims for every type of crime except murder. Black victims seem to be underrepresented among surveyed claims for all types of crime. Claims for Hispanic victims may occur at rates higher than expected for murder, but appear less likely than expected for physical assault and robbery.

About half the victims in both the FBI's UCR (www.fbi.gov/ucr) statistics and our sample of surveyed claims are White. Claims may be filed less often than expected for Black homicide victims, since Blacks make up 46 percent of all murder victims but only 26 percent of victims in compensation claims. Conversely, Hispanics are among the three percent of "other" murder victims in national data on victims' race, but 16 percent of murder victims in surveyed claims. NCVS data (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cv00.htm) show that Whites and Hispanics have about equal rates of physical assault victimization (23.3 and 23 per 1,000), while the rate for Blacks is somewhat higher (26.9 per 1,000). Yet White victims comprised three-quarters of the claims for assault, while Blacks made up only 14 percent of these claims and Hispanics only eight percent. Whites and Blacks have about equal rates of sexual assault victimization (1.1 and 1.2 per 1,000), with rates for Hispanics much lower (.5 per 1,000, but this statistic is based on a very small sample size). Again, the majority of claims for sexual assault were from White victims, with many fewer from Blacks and Hispanics. Finally, robbery rates are highest for Blacks (at 7.2 per 1,000), then Hispanics (at 5.0 per 1,000), and lowest for Whites (at 2.7 per 1,000). And again, Whites made up the majority of victims in claims for robbery, burglary, and theft (most of these were robbery).

Victims' Age by Type of Crime. In our sample of claims, victims of homicide, physical assaults, and drunk driving crashes were in their mid-thirties, on average, whereas victims of sexual assault were much younger on average, and victims of robbery, burglary, and theft were much older on average. These differences are statistically significant. UCR data (www.fbi.gov/ucr) can be used to estimate an average age of about 32 for homicide victims, although the largest number of victims falls in the 20 to 24 age category. This is approximately comparable with the average age of homicide victims in our sample. Older victims of assault may be disproportionately likely to apply for compensation, since NCVS data (Rennison, 2001) indicate that people ages 12 to 24 are at the highest risk of assault, whereas the average age for

victims in our sample was 34. Sexual assault is most likely to happen to those ages 16 to 19; since the average age of victims in our survey was 18, this suggests that claimants may be generally representative of victims at large, on the age dimension. Older victims of robbery, burglary, and theft may be much more likely to claim compensation than younger victims, since these crimes occur at much lower rates to those 35 and older (compared with younger people), while the average age of claimants in our sample was 67.

Processing Time by Type of Crime. Claims for robbery, burglary, and theft took the shortest amount of time to process, at an average of just over a month. Other claims took from slightly over two months to just under three months, on average, with sexual assault claims taking the longest time. These differences, while somewhat striking, did not reach statistical significance.

Claim Decision by Type of Crime. Claims for drunk driving crashes were the least likely to be approved, although just over two-thirds of these claims were approved. Approval rates for other types of crimes ranged from over three-quarters to about nine in ten. Differences across crime types were statistically significant.

Average Payments by Type of Crime. For claims with payment data in the program records, drunk driving crashes and homicides had the largest payouts, at levels approaching \$3,000 on average. Payments on claims for other types of crimes were at or below half that level, on average. Differences across crime types did not, however, reach statistical significance.

Focus on Family Violence, Gun Crime, and Workplace Violence

Certain crimes – defined not by legal codes but by critical circumstances of the crime -- are of particular interest, because of policy debates, emerging trends, and concerns that compensation has been under-utilized by victims of some types of crimes. We asked a few questions in the survey that would allow us to provide some information on several particular types of crime.

Family Violence. There have been concerns that victims of domestic violence under-utilize compensation, because of police reporting requirements and other barriers. We included questions on victim/offender relationship in the survey (questions #4 and 4a) to assess the presence of domestic violence in this sample. We found that 293, nearly two-thirds, of the victims knew their offenders. Of these 293, 128 (28 percent of the total sample) involved family violence (where the offender was the victim's current or former spouse or boyfriend/girlfriend, or another immediate or extended family member). Of these 128, 78 (17 percent of the total sample) involved intimate partner violence (current or former spouses or boyfriends/girlfriends), and the other 50 (11 percent of the total sample) involved immediate or extended family members (most likely parent/child or sibling violence). Tables 7 and 8 present information on the crimes, payments, and victim characteristics for intimate partner violence and other family violence.

Table 7: Intimate Partner Violence in Claimant Survey Sample

Number of claims	78
Type of crime	
Homicide	5%
Physical assault	80%
Sexual assault	15%
Approval rate	96% (75 of 78 claims)
Claims paid	39 (67% of the 58 approved claims with payment data available)
Amounts paid	
Total	\$54,451
Median	\$751
Average	\$1,396
Range	\$14-\$5,880
Victim demographics	
Sex	9% male, 91% female
Race	75% White, 13% Black, 9% Hispanic
Age	Average=34, median=33

NCVS estimates place intimate partner violence at 10 percent of violent crime overall against victims age 12 and older (including aggravated and simple assaults, sexual assault, and robbery). Intimate partner violence accounted for 17 percent of the claims in our survey sample, indicating that – based on the prevalence of intimate partner violence among other violent crimes, but not considering other compensation eligibility criteria⁵² -- these crimes do not seem to be underrepresented in claimant rolls (to the extent that our sample represents claimants in general). This may reflect the responsiveness of compensation programs to concerns that intimate partner violence victims were underserved, as witnessed by the expansion of eligible expenses to meet the unique needs of these victims (e.g., many programs now pay for moving and relocation expenses), specific prohibitions against blanket “unjust enrichment” exclusions in these cases in OVC guidelines and state policies, prohibitions against using cohabitation as evidence of contributory misconduct, and greater outreach efforts to programs that work with these victims.

Compared with our general sample of survey respondents, victims of intimate partner violence:

- were more likely to be victims of physical assault and less likely to be identified as victims of sexual assault
- were more likely to have their claims approved

⁵² For example, it could be argued that victims of intimate partner violence should be disproportionately over represented among claimants if these victims are disproportionately more likely to incur expenses not paid by other sources, compared with victims of other types of crimes.

- were about as likely to have had payments made on approved claims
- had a higher median payment amount but a lower average amount (indicating that there were fewer very large payment amounts on these claims)
- were much more likely to be female
- were about similar in racial/ethnic composition, and
- were of about the same average age but a higher median age (indicating fewer very young victims, as could be expected).

In addition to these claims for intimate partner violence, another 50 claims were due to crimes involving violence between other immediate or extended family members.

Table 8: Other Family Violence in Claimant Survey Sample

Number of claims	50
Type of crime	
Homicide	6%
Physical assault	20%
Sexual assault	70%
Approval rate	92% (46 of 50)
Claims paid	24 (63% of 38 approved claims with payment data available)
Amounts paid	
Total	\$37,671
Median	\$954
Average	\$1,570
Range	\$37-\$5,690
Victim demographics	
Sex	26% male, 74% female
Race	76% White, 8% Black, 12% Hispanic
Age	Average=19, median=13, range=1-69

Comparisons cannot be made with NCVS data for these cases, since half of the other family violence victims in our sample were 12 years old or younger, and the NCVS does not include any victims under age 12. However, comparisons with characteristics of the survey sample at large show that claims for non-intimate-partner family violence:

- were much more likely to be for sexual assault and less likely for physical assault
- were somewhat more likely to be approved
- had payments made on approved claims at about the same rate
- had a higher median payment amount but a similar average amount (indicating fewer very large payments)
- were more often for female victims, and
- were about similar in racial/ethnic composition.

However, claims for other family violence were more likely to involve younger victims than claims for all types of crime, at an average age of 19 and a median age of 13 (indicating there were a few victims who were much older than the other {non-intimate-partner} family violence victims in general). Many of these victims most likely suffered child abuse at the hands of their parents or other adult family members.

Crimes Involving a Gun. Gun violence prevention is a very controversial topic. We thought it would be of interest to obtain some information on gun-related crime and its impact on compensation. The survey asked whether the offender used or threatened to use a weapon during the crime (question #2). Thirty percent of the claimants responded positively; for these cases, a gun was used nearly half the time (question #2a), representing 13 percent of all claimants who participated in the survey. Information on the gun crime-related claims, presented in Table 9, describes the gun crime victims being served by compensation, and how much these crimes cost compensation programs.

Table 9: Gun Crimes in Claimant Survey Sample

Number of claims	59
Type of crime	
Homicide	39%
Physical assault	45%
Sexual assault	10%
Robbery	6%
Approval rate	76% (45 of the 59)
Claims paid	27 (61% of the 44 approved gun crime claims with payment data available)
Amounts paid	
Total	\$68,746
Median	\$1,165
Average	\$2,546
Range	\$50-\$15,527
Victim demographics	
Sex	51% male, 49% female
Race	48% White, 36% Black, 15% Hispanic
Age	Median=25, Average=31

Victims of gun-related crimes seem to be accessing compensation programs, as NCVS data estimate that eight percent of violent crime victims⁵³ faced a firearm (Rennison, 2001), while these crimes represented 13 percent of the claims in our survey sample. Compared with the overall survey sample, victims of gun crime:

⁵³ Since the NCVS definition of violent crime excludes homicide, and UCR data estimate that 70% of murders involve guns, the 8% estimate should be increased slightly for greater comparability with our sample. However, the increase would be quite small since homicides are less than 1% of violent crime overall.

- were much more likely to be victims of homicide (due to the lethality of firearms); about equally likely to be victims of physical assault and robbery; and less likely to be victims of sexual assault
- were less likely to have their claims approved
- once approved, claims were only slightly less likely to have been paid at the point of sampling
- for cases with payments, both average and median amounts were much higher
- were more likely to be male
- were more likely to represent racial/ethnic minorities, and
- were about the same age on average, but of a younger median age (indicating more youthful victims).

Workplace Crimes. Crimes occurring in the workplace have been capturing headlines in recent years, but little is yet known about these crimes and society’s response to them. We asked survey respondents whether the crime occurred where the victim worked (question #3). Only 35 (8 percent) of these claims were for workplace crime. While these numbers are few, it might be informative to provide a brief description of the crimes, payments, and victims associated with workplace crime. See Table 10 for these data.

Table 10: Workplace Crimes in Claimant Survey Sample

Number of claims	35
Type of crime	
Homicide	12%
Physical assault	64%
Sexual assault	18%
Robbery	6%
Approval rate	89% (31 of the 35)
Claims paid	14 (50% of the 28 approved workplace crime claims with payment data available)
Amounts paid	
Total	\$51,003
Median	\$1,111
Average	\$3,643
Range	\$33-\$22,923
Victim demographics	
Sex	49% male, 51% female
Race	80% White, 6% Black, 14% Hispanic
Age	Average=34

Compared with the overall survey sample, victims of workplace violence were:

- somewhat more likely to be victims of homicide, much more likely to be victims of physical assault, and less likely to be victims of sexual assault and robbery
- about as likely to have their claims approved for payment
- less likely to have approved claims that had been paid when these data were collected
- when payments were made they were for greater amounts, on average
- somewhat more likely to be White or Hispanic males than the general sample, but average ages were about the same

The Need for Compensation

The financial consequences of a violent crime often go well beyond the initial trauma and physical harm caused by the crime. Mounting medical and mental healthcare costs, funeral expenses, lost support from deceased victims, and lost wages to receive services and participate in criminal justice system proceedings are just some of the many expenses often incurred after victimization. While some victims have insurance or other collateral resources to meet these expenses, many victims do not. Compensation reimburses victims for expenses not covered by insurance or other sources. We asked claimants what kinds of expenses they incurred, what expenses they claimed, and what out-of-pocket losses they sustained, to assess how well compensation programs meet victims' financial needs.

Expenses Incurred

While the list of specific eligible expenses varies state by state, federal eligibility guidelines outline the categories of expenses that federal funds may cover. Federal guidelines in effect during 2000 included medical costs, dental costs, expenses for mental health treatment, funeral costs, crime scene clean-up expenses, lost wages, and loss of support. State policies frequently cover other types of expenses as well, such as moving expenses, rehabilitation services, attorneys' fees, replacement services, transportation expenses, and replacement of stolen cash benefits. Question # 12 on the claimant phone survey asked claimants whether the crime caused them to incur each of 14 types of expenses, including these and other types. See Appendix E.

The most common type of expense incurred was for medical treatment, at over two-thirds of the survey respondents. Nearly half of all claimants indicated that they incurred costs for mental health services following the victimization, and between one-third and half of the claimants lost wages or incurred transportation related expenses. About a quarter of all claimants suffered costs for property loss or replacement. Other types of expenses reported by less than 20 percent of the surveyed claimants include stolen cash or checks, moving or relocation expenses, attorneys' fees, rehabilitation services, funeral expenses, dental treatment, loss of support from a deceased victim, crime scene clean-up, and replacement services. With the exception of property loss or replacement expenses, federal and state expense eligibility criteria seem to cover the types of expenses victims incur pretty well.

Expenses Claimed

Claimants may incur a crime-related cost but not request compensation for it because the cost may not fall within the state's eligibility criteria, because of payments from insurance companies or other resources, and other reasons. We asked claimants what kinds of losses they requested compensation for (question # 12a in Appendix D).

The most common costs were medical and mental health treatment, at about half or more of claimants. About three-quarters or more of the claimants who had these costs requested compensation for them. The others may have had adequate insurance coverage. Somewhat under half the claimants had transportation expenses and lost wages, but only about half of those with these expenses requested compensation. All states compensate for lost wages, and most of these six states compensate for at least some travel expenses. Similarly, over one-quarter of claimants incurred expenses for property loss or replacement, but only about half of those requested compensation. This is not surprising, since the availability of compensation for lost property is very restricted. It might be of interest for future efforts to take a closer look at why victims with potentially eligible expenses may not make claims for those expenses.

Out-of-Pocket Losses to Claimants

Clearly compensation does not cover all the crime-related costs incurred by all claimants, nor is it intended to. While other sources of recompense may help out, many claimants still end up paying for some crime-related expenses out of their own pockets. We asked claimants for an estimate of their unrecouped expenses, after all sources of recompense were considered (question # 13). Just over two-thirds of the sample sustained unrecovered financial losses. Over a quarter of the sample reported no unrecouped expenses, while five percent did not know or answer this particular item. Estimated out-of-pocket losses ranged from \$5 to \$700,000, with a median amount of \$600 and an average of \$5,762.⁵⁴ From one-fifth to one-third of those with unrecovered expenses reported that the expenses paid out-of-pocket were medical, transportation, lost wages, and replacement of lost property other than stolen cash or benefit checks (question # 14). While some claimants may have received additional payments after the date on which the survey was conducted, thus lowering their out-of-pocket losses, many claimants were surveyed some time after the date of determination, by which point all or most of the payments may have been made. In fact, correlational analyses found that the longer the time lag between the date of determination and the date of the survey, the more claimed expenses had been paid ($r=.16$, $p<.004$).

Summary and Implications

Compensation seems to work very well for some claimants; over a quarter of the total sample reported no unrecovered losses. However, others must pay sometimes significant sums to cover the costs of a victimization (even after considering insurance and other sources of

⁵⁴ The average is influenced by several extremely large estimates (\$100,000 and \$700,000), so the median may be a better measure of the "typical" out-of-pocket loss.

payment). While some may have run afoul of contributory misconduct or other eligibility criteria, it seems that expanding eligible expenses or loosening eligibility requirements could help to alleviate some of the financial burden borne by claimants themselves. For example, medical expenses are frequently incurred and frequently claimed, but also the major type of unrecouped expense for those with out-of-pocket losses. Transportation expenses, lost wages, and property loss or replacement are incurred at significant levels, but are less often claimed and also make up significant portions of out-of-pocket losses.

Learning About Compensation

Obviously, victims cannot apply for compensation if they do not know it exists. Because victims' compensation is not universally known (as, for example, workers' compensation is), many states have laws requiring criminal justice personnel who contact victims to inform them about compensation and help them with the process. Most states have passed victims' rights legislation specifying compensation notification as a basic right of all victims of violent crime. In about two-thirds of these states, law enforcement officers are required to inform victims about compensation. Prosecutors are also required to inform victims in about half of these states. Because states have time deadlines on reporting to police and filing for compensation, it is important that victims learn of compensation in a timely manner so they can meet these criteria. We asked the claimants in our survey who informed them about compensation and how quickly they first learned of it.

Who Informs Claimants About Compensation?

How victims learn about compensation remains a concern common to policymakers, program administrators, victim advocates, and others. In our survey of compensation claimants, respondents indicated that they learned about compensation from a wide variety of sources (item # 6 in Appendix E). The most likely sources of information include victim service programs (more specifically, victim advocates and hotline operators), the police, and prosecutors. The claimant survey found that victim service staff provided compensation information to a third of the surveyed claimants, police introduced the program to a quarter of the sample, and 14 percent learned of compensation from prosecutors. Less than a tenth of the claimants learned about compensation from medical providers. Other less common sources of information include friends and relatives of the claimant, judges, counselors, and letters from the compensation program itself.

How Quickly Do Claimants Learn About Compensation?

The vast majority of claimants indicated that they had never heard of crime victim compensation before the crime occurred⁵⁵ (item # 7). However, nearly 90 percent of these claimants learned of compensation within six months after the crime, which is the shortest state

⁵⁵ Of those who knew about compensation before the crime (a bit more than a tenth of the sample), about a quarter had previously applied for compensation.

filing deadline. Indeed, nearly half of the sample learned about compensation within a week after the crime occurred (item # 7a).

An additional survey item (# 7b) asked the 21 percent of claimants who did not learn about compensation until at least a month following the victimization whether this delay caused problems with their claims. The large majority of these claimants indicated that the relatively longer time it took to discover compensation posed no problems when filing their claims. For the handful of claimants who experienced problems because of the delay, most indicated that they had difficulty meeting filing deadlines. A few had trouble getting all the requisite forms together.

Summary and Implications

Clearly, most of the sample learned about crime victims' compensation in sufficient time to complete their claims. Nearly nine in ten surveyed claimants learned about compensation within six months following the crime, and less than three percent of the entire sample reported difficulties with filing their claims as a result of delays in learning about the program.

While these findings are certainly encouraging, it is worth noting that many non-claimants (who were not included in this survey) may never have learned about the program, or may have learned about it too late to file a claim. While this survey cannot provide any data on potential claimants who do not apply, four out of five state compensation administrators claimed that many potentially eligible victims do not apply for compensation (Newmark et al, 2000).

One way to increase application rates among crime victims is to expand outreach and training efforts to potential sources of program information. According to surveyed claimants, victim service agencies and the police were the most likely sources of program information: Taken together, these two sources familiarized more than half of the entire sample with the compensation program and procedures. However, some victims may not have contact with nonprofit victim service agencies, particularly victims of crimes other than domestic violence or sexual assault. In addition, there is a trend toward relaxing police reporting requirements, so police-based personnel may not contact as many potential claimants in the future. Others who often contact potential claimants — such as medical providers — may be fruitful sources of referrals. Respondents indicated that they learned about compensation from these sources at much lower rates, suggesting that more resources could be dedicated to training these sources to expand outreach to more potentially eligible claimants.

The Claim Process

The process of applying for compensation involves a number of steps. The claimant, or those assisting him or her with the claim, first files a claim form with (or sometimes without) supporting documentation verifying the crime and crime-related expenses incurred. The compensation program may often need additional verification, and requests documents from the claimant, the agency helping him or her with the claim, or other agencies directly involved in the

crime or resulting expenses, such as law enforcement, service providers, employers, and insurance companies. The compensation program then analyzes the case with the goal of reaching a fair decision, in compliance with its regulations and policies, in as short a time as possible. To obtain the claimants' perspective on the claims process, we asked several questions in the survey about their experiences with assistance needed in the process and documentation requirements. We also analyzed data provided by compensation programs to assess claims processing time in this sample of claims.

Assistance with the Claims Process

Compensation procedures require that claims be accompanied by a variety of paperwork verifying that the crime occurred, the expenses incurred, lack of payment from other sources, victim reports to the police and cooperation with the authorities, lack of victim contributory misconduct, and so on. While it is certainly necessary to obtain the information needed to apply eligibility criteria and effectively manage public funds, the claims process can become quite complex. To the extent that claimants are expected to provide the necessary documentation, they may need a good deal of assistance. Many states have victims' rights laws that require certain staff to provide assistance with the claims process, and many state programs make efforts to train these personnel on the compensation program's policies and procedures and provide application materials. Our survey of claimants took a closer look at who provides assistance and what types of help they provide. We also asked claimants what other types of help they needed but did not receive.

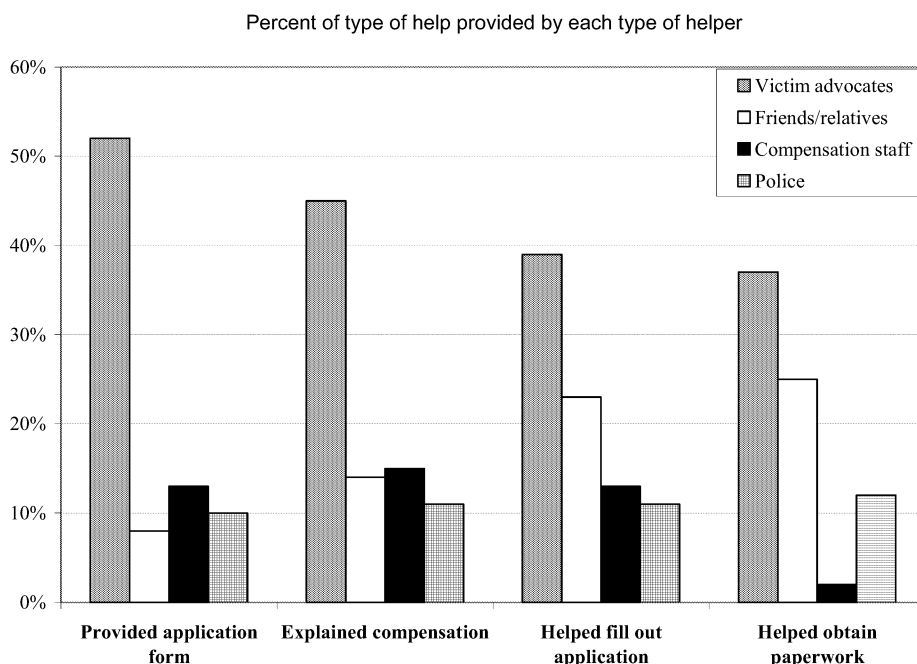
The survey asked claimants whether they received assistance in filing their claim (question # 8). Half of the sample reported that someone helped them apply for compensation, *but almost half received no help at all*. We asked those who did receive help who it was that helped them (item # 8a). Claimants were most likely to be assisted by victim advocates (41 percent of these claimants). No other source was mentioned by more than 20 percent of claimants, but the leading sources were friends and relatives (17 percent of claimants who got help), compensation program staff (11 percent of these claimants), and the police (10 percent of claimants who received assistance). Even fewer claimants were assisted by prosecutors, medical providers, or others.

For those who got help with the compensation claim, we also asked what types of help they received (item # 8b). The majority of those who received help got assistance in filling out the application and understanding the compensation program. Many other claimants reported that they had help obtaining the compensation application form, and others got help with getting the required paperwork together.

We analyzed the data on who provided help in conjunction with the data on what type of help was received to assess which sources were most likely to provide each type of assistance. We included in this analysis only the most common sources of help (victim advocates, friends and relatives, compensation program staff, and the police), and the types of help most often

received (providing an application form, explaining the compensation program, helping fill out the form, and helping obtain required paperwork). See Figure 2 for a summary of the major findings from this analysis.

Figure 2. Types of Assistance



Victim advocates were the most common source for every type of help. They provided help to between 37 percent and 52 percent of the claimants who got each type of help. Friends and relatives were more likely to help with filling out the application (23 percent of those who got this type of help) and getting the required paperwork together (25 percent of those who got this type of help) than in other ways. The compensation program was *least* likely to help with obtaining paperwork to support the claim (only 2 percent of those who got help with their paperwork), and provided assistance to between 13 percent and 15 percent of those who got the other types of help. Not many claimants reported getting any type of help from the police (10 percent to 12 percent of those who got each type of help), but when the police did help they were about equally likely to provide each type of assistance.

We also asked survey respondents about help they needed but did *not* get. Nearly one-tenth of the total survey sample reported needing help with their claim that they did not receive (item # 9); most of these claimants got no help at all, but about one-quarter did receive assistance which evidently did not meet all their needs. The type of help wanted but not received (question # 9a) was most often an explanation of the program, and sometimes assistance with filling out the claim form. Again, this particular subgroup only constitutes a tenth of the total sample, so

the vast majority of the claimants said they received all the help they needed. It should be reiterated that we may very well hear a different story if we were to survey victims who did *not* apply for compensation.

Documentation Requirements

While the specific requirements differ somewhat from claim to claim, police reports, proof of expenses, proof of payments, medical records, and proof of income are some of the types of documentation most often required as part of a compensation claim. We asked survey participants a series of questions (items # 10 to 11c) intended to learn more about their role in the verification process, and whether procedures could be made more workable for claimants.

When asked what paperwork they initially submitted with their claim, half the survey respondents either did not know or said they did not send in any paperwork.⁵⁶ The most common response for those who provided this information was proof of expenses, at 27 percent of the total sample. Sixteen percent said they provided the police report; less than one in ten provided other types of documentation with the initial application.

Given the apparently low rate at which claimants provided verification with their claim, it is surprising that only 30 percent reported being asked for more information by the program. This may indicate that they are not aware of all the documentation submitted on their behalf (at least for those who got help), or that compensation programs request additional verification directly from the police, service providers, advocates, or others, rather than from claimants.

When compensation programs asked claimants for additional paperwork they most often sought proof of expenses, followed by insurance benefits statements, police reports, and proof of payments for expenses stemming from the crime. Most of the claimants asked to submit additional information were able to provide all the requested documentation, but a fifth indicated that they did not provide any of the additional information requested by the program. Some were not able to obtain the requested paperwork, while others decided the request was too much trouble, took too much time, or was too confusing.

Processing Time

How quickly compensation programs are able to evaluate claims and distribute payments is a critical measure of the program's success, given the importance of assisting victims in a timely fashion. Improving application turnaround time is a major concern of federal and state policymakers, administrators, and advocates. According to *New Directions From the Field*:

⁵⁶ Nearly a third of all claimants reported not knowing what paperwork was sent in with the claim. Of these, about half got help from others, so they may not have known what was sent in because they did not gather the paperwork themselves. However, the other half — about 15% of the total sample — probably had forgotten what paperwork they initially submitted, since they did not report receiving help from others. Another 19% of the total sample reported they did not send in any documentation with their claim.

Victims' Rights and Services for the 21st Century, states should strive to process all claims within twelve to twenty-one weeks (OVC, 1998).

While the survey did not collect information to compute processing time (we thought specific dates would be too detailed for most respondents' recall), supplemental state program information offers insights into processing times for the claims included in the survey.⁵⁷ Data are available for five of the six states -- one did not provide all the data necessary to compute processing time. As displayed in Table 11, the average claim processing time for surveyed claims -- measured from receipt of claim to date of determination, and excluding payment processing time since we did not get this information -- was 10 weeks, ranging from less than a week to about 13 months.

Table 11: Claims Processing Time for Surveyed Claimants

Number of claims with processing time data	371
Average processing time (excluding processing of payments)	10 weeks
Range	Less than 1 week to 56 weeks

Summary and Implications

While only about half the claimants reported receiving help with their claims, most surveyed claimants said they received all the help they needed. The most common source of help is victim advocates, followed by friends and relatives, compensation program staff, and the police. While it is certainly encouraging to find that claimants are receiving the assistance they desire, the relatively large number of claimants who receive help from friends and family members points to a possible need for better program outreach to other sources of help. Friends and relatives may know little more about compensation than the claimant herself, while professionals trained in compensation program procedures may offer more comprehensive assistance. The low numbers of individuals who received assistance from police, medical providers, and compensation program staff may indicate a greater need to train these sources in how to help victims apply for compensation and provide them with the necessary resources. It should be noted that potentially eligible claimants who did not file claims may have very different experiences with compensation assistance.

Although about one-quarter or fewer of the claimants reported initially sending in each of various types of documentation commonly needed by compensation programs to process claims, only 30 percent of claimants reported being asked for more information by the compensation program. While memory losses or misunderstandings may account for some of these cases, this

⁵⁷ It should be noted that the definitions states use to compute processing time vary state by state, rendering comparisons across states only approximations. For example, some states "start the clock" when the application is first received, with or without the required documentation, while others wait until all documentation requirements are complete, and others fall somewhere in between.

may also indicate that compensation programs are frequently requesting needed verifications from parties other than the claimants (such as advocates, service providers, law enforcement, insurance companies, and so on). Alternatively, it is possible that programs are not always following up on missing verifications.

Claims in our survey sample were processed relatively quickly on average, compared with identified goals for processing time.

Claim Outcomes

The end goal of the claim process is to reach a decision on whether and how much payment should be made for each claim, in accordance with state laws and policies, and in light of the facts of each case. Payments for approved claims with eligible expenses should be made as quickly as possible. When claims or specific expenses are denied, claimants should be informed of the denial and the reasons for denial, and the appeals option should be explained. We asked claimants about their understanding of payments made, reasons for denials, and the appeals process. Their perceptions of the claim outcome may have important implications for program practices and client satisfaction.

Claim Payments

State program data on the survey sample reveal that nearly nine in ten surveyed claims had been approved. Nearly two-thirds of approved claims with payment data available had had payments made, at an average of \$1,553 per claim. Table 12 provides information on the compensation funds represented in this sample.

Table 12: Approval Rates and Payments Made on Claims in Survey Sample

Claims with data on decision (approved vs. denied)	452
Claims approved	393 (87%)
Approved claims with payment data available (excludes one state that did not provide payment data)	327
Claims paid	212 (65% of the 327)
Amounts paid	
Total	\$329,230
Median	\$639
Average	\$1,553
Range	\$14-\$22,923

We also asked claimants about compensation payments made (question # 15 and 15a). Rather than ask about amounts paid (which we did not expect claimants to know since payments are often made directly to service providers – nearly half the time, according to survey responses to question # 16), we simply asked whether all, some, or none of their expenses were paid. While we did not expect this to yield completely reliable data on payments, we felt it was important to get a general idea of their perceptions of the outcome of the claim so that we could

assess whether claimants' understanding of the outcome is associated with their overall satisfaction with the compensation program (reported in the next section).

Over two-fifths of the sample reported that all their claimed expenses were paid by compensation, another one-fifth reported that some of their expenses were paid, and about one-quarter of the sample claimed that none of their expenses had been paid by compensation. We did not receive sufficiently detailed information from state databases to allow us to verify claimants' reports of the extent to which claimed expenses were paid on a case-by-case basis. However, 63 percent of claimants reported that at least some payments had been made on their claim, which is close to program records that 65 percent of approved claims had been paid (for the five states for which payment data were available).

Reasons for Denials

We asked claimants whose claims were denied in whole or in part about the programs' explanations for denials (questions # 17). *Only half the claimants reported being given reasons for the denial.* It seemed possible that state programs may have been providing explanations to agencies that helped claimants with the process, and that these agencies may not have been passing on the information to the claimant. However, those who got help with the compensation claim were no more nor less likely than those who did not get help to report being told the reasons for their denials, according to statistical chi-square analyses. Perhaps claimants tend not to remember whether reasons for denials were explained to them, or perhaps programs are not conveying this information as effectively as could be desired.

We asked those who said they were told the reasons for denial what those reasons were. According to surveyed claimants' reports, the most common reason for denial was ineligibility of expenses claimed. Other common reasons were payment by collateral resources such as insurance companies and failure to provide documentation for the claim. Only seven percent of the claimants reported contributory misconduct as a reason for denial. Unfortunately data on reasons for denials were not available in program databases with enough consistency to permit reliable comparisons between reasons according to the compensation program and reasons according to the claimants.

Appeals

Nearly all states provide an option for denied claimants to appeal the decision, and all six states represented in the claimant survey have appeals procedures. The compensation programs have procedures in place for notifying claimants of the appeals option and explaining the process. *However, when we asked claimants with full or partial denial whether the appeals process had been explained to them, only 16 percent reported that it had* (questions # 18 to 19a). Again, we thought this might be related to whether the claimant got help with the claims process, but chi-square analyses found no relationship between these factors. Thus, those who received help were just as likely as those who did not receive help to say they were not told about the appeals process.

We asked those who were told about the appeals process who it was that told them. Compensation program staff explained the appeals process to half of the relatively few claimants who reported being notified about the option at all. Lawyers and victim advocates provided other claimants with appeals information. Three-quarters of those who were told about the appeals process indicated that they fully understood the information they were given. Given the low numbers of applicants who were notified about the appeals process, it is unsurprising that very few claimants filed an appeal – only nine percent of those with denials.

Summary and Implications

About two-thirds of the surveyed claimants reported that compensation paid at least some of their crime-related expenses. While most claims do produce at least partial payment, there seems to be a gap in conveying information when claims are denied. Many claimants with at least partial denials reported they were not aware of the reasons for denial; they may not have been told the reasons, they may not have understood or remembered the reasons. In addition, the majority of those with denied claims did not report being informed about the appeals option. Taken together, these findings may indicate that compensation programs should examine how they communicate determination information, so that those with denials can consider what steps to take next (efforts to meet program requirements, filing an appeal, and so on).

Experiences with the Compensation Programs and Implications for Policy and Practice

The survey's final section about the compensation experience was a series of questions on claimants' opinions and recommendations about compensation policies and practices (questions # 20 to 36). These questions covered the process of applying for compensation, the outcome of the process, police reporting and payer of last resort requirements, eligibility criteria, payment caps, and recommendations for future improvements. Statistical results are presented in detail with the survey in Appendix D; the following are some highlights.

The Process of Applying for Compensation

On the whole, claimants who gave an opinion reported favorable perceptions of application procedures:

- 93 percent said the application was easy to fill out.
- 95 percent said the application did not take a long time to fill out.
- 29 percent said it was hard or burdensome to get the required paperwork together. This was as true for those who got help with the process as for those who did not.
- 82 percent said the letters they received from the compensation program were not difficult to read or understand.
- a little over half the claimants spoke with compensation program staff; of those who did:
 - 93 percent said the compensation staff person was willing to listen to their questions and concerns.

- 87 percent said their questions and concerns were answered by the program staff.
- 33 percent of those who provided this information said they were asked if they needed referrals to other services.
- 79 percent of those who needed return phone calls from compensation program staff received the calls promptly.

Claimants' experiences with the application process thus seemed generally satisfactory. While the majority of the claimants' reports were quite positive, these findings may suggest a few areas for improvement. Over one-quarter of the claimants felt it was difficult or burdensome to meet documentation requirements. While this is a minority, it may be an area for programs to address. Programs should consider exploring ways in which their staff, victim service providers, law enforcement, and providers of other services can take a greater role in securing documentation or providing assistance to claimants attempting to obtain documentation. This is likely to be a complicated task, with issues arising around cumbersome record-keeping systems, incompatible databases, and confidentiality.

Another way of serving victims better is suggested by the finding that only one-third of the victims who spoke with compensation program staff said they were asked if they needed service referrals. While in many cases it may not be appropriate or necessary to ask this, many programs are expanding compensation functions to include more victim assistance activities such as service referrals. Some programs, for example, are obtaining VOCA assistance grants to hire a staff person to serve as an in-house advocate, providing victims with service referrals and other types of information. These efforts will benefit from coordination with state victim assistance administrators (VOCA and other funds) and advocacy groups, to maintain current information on services available in communities across the state.

Outcome of the Process

We also found that claimants who gave an opinion were generally satisfied with the outcome of the compensation process:

- 78 percent said the decision about paying their claim was fair and reasonable.
- 78 percent said their claim was paid in a reasonable amount of time.
- 29 percent said the amount of time it took to receive the payment caused problems for them.
- 94 percent said they would recommend the compensation program to a friend.
- 80 percent said the compensation process was not more trouble than it was worth.

While these findings are again nearly always very positive, they do suggest that the amount of time it takes to receive a compensation award could be improved, since over one-quarter of those who received a payment said there was a delay that caused problems for them. We cannot tell from these data exactly what the problem was or whether the payment could have been made

more quickly, but improving processing time is an area many states have been emphasizing. Improvements can come through increased staff, more efficient procedures, and loosening eligibility requirements to reduce the amount of verification needed.

Compensation Program Policies

We also asked a few questions to assess claimants' perceptions of key program policies, including police reporting and payer of last resort requirements, eligibility criteria, and payment caps. We found that:

- 94 percent of those who responded said they would have reported the crime to the police even if they were not required to do so to seek compensation.
- 77 percent of those who responded said they would have notified their insurance company about crime-related expenses even if they were not required to do so to seek compensation.
- 38 percent of the total sample said they had specific expenses denied by the compensation program; of those, three-quarters thought those expenses should have been covered. The most common types of expenses these claimants thought should have been covered were medical expenses, lost wages, mental health expenses, and property loss other than stolen cash or checks.
- 10 percent of those whose claims were totally denied said their claim was denied because the type of crime was ineligible. These crimes were about equally split between violent and property crimes.
- 11 percent who responded said their claim was denied (wholly or partially) because it was for more money than the program allows; half of those thought the cap should be raised.

Police reporting requirements do not seem to pose an obstacle to claimants, although victims who do *not* apply for compensation might feel differently (this may be a reason for many decisions not to claim compensation). A larger but still relatively small percentage of claimants would have preferred not to have reported the crime to their insurance company;⁵⁸ this, again, may be different for non-claimants. Every state considers compensation the payer of last resort, and it is difficult to see how this could be enforced if claimants with insurance are not required to seek insurance benefits in order to be eligible for compensation. Eligibility criteria based on type of crime did not seem to present an obstacle to many claimants, although those who do not apply for compensation because they are victims of non-eligible crimes might like to see this criterion expanded. Payment caps do not seem to result in many denials for claimants. There has, however, been a recent trend in which states have been raising caps (or categorical sub-caps) to meet the needs of the small proportion of victims with catastrophic injuries and other very costly crime-related needs.

⁵⁸ We conducted analyses to assess whether victims of some types of crimes were more likely than victims of other crimes to prefer not to report to their insurance, but did not find significant results.

A little over a quarter of the total sample indicated dissatisfaction with expense eligibility rules, in that they claimed expenses denied as ineligible, which the claimants thought should have been eligible. These expenses generally fell into eligible categories (medical, lost wages, and mental health counseling), so they may have claimed expenses which did not fall within conventional boundaries of those categories, or they may have misunderstood the denial reason. An additional type of expense which claimants felt should not have been denied was property loss other than stolen cash or checks (allowed in some states). States may pay property loss with their own funds, but federal funds cannot be used for property loss (defined to exclude medical and other personal devices) and state expenditures cannot be included in payout certifications. Because of these restrictions on funding availability and the very large amount of funds which would be needed, expansions of expense eligibility to include property loss would need to be very carefully considered.

Claimants' Recommendations for Program Improvements

Despite the favorable perceptions in these findings, half the survey participants offered suggestions for program improvements. The most common suggestions were for more extensive outreach or advertisement of the program, and better explanations of the program's procedures and options. It appears that claimants were generally pleased with the compensation experience, and felt that greater information sharing would increase the usability of the program.

What Factors Improve Claimants' Perceptions of the Compensation Program?

We were interested in exploring the factors associated with claimants' perceptions, to identify areas in which policies and practices might be improved to meet clients' needs even more fully. To approach this task in a manageable fashion, we used questions from this section of the survey to form a scale, then conducted statistical analyses to see which factors best explained more positive perceptions. The items making up this scale are:

- was the application easy to fill out? (question # 20)
- did the application take a long time to fill out? (question # 21)
- did you need outside assistance to help you through the process? (question # 22)
- were the letters from the compensation program difficult to read or understand? (question # 23)
- was the person you spoke with at the compensation program willing to listen to your questions and concerns? (question # 24a)
- were your questions and concerns answered by that person? (question # 24b)
- was it hard or burdensome to get all the paperwork together? (question # 25)
- was your claim paid in a reasonable amount of time? (question # 26)
- was the decision about paying your claim fair and reasonable? (question # 27)
- did the amount of time it took to receive payment cause problems for you? (question # 28)

- would you recommend a friend apply for compensation? (question # 29)
- was seeking compensation more trouble than it was worth? (question # 30)

The scale derived from these items was computed so that scores ranged from 12 to 24, with higher scores indicating more positive perceptions (scoring on individual items was reversed as necessary). Scale scores were computed for all cases with valid data on two-thirds (eight) or more of the individual items, for a total of 373 cases (83 percent of the total survey sample). The total scale score was computed as the sum of the scores on each item divided by the number of items providing data, to adjust for missing data, then multiplied by 12 for a range of 12 to 24. Analyses of the scaling system yielded a Cronbach's alpha (a measure of internal consistency) of .74, indicating that the items are reasonably consistent with each other and would seem to indicate a single underlying dimension, which we are labeling overall perceptions of the compensation experience.

As suggested by the pattern of findings on the individual items, scale scores tended to be concentrated near the upper range of the scale. While the midpoint of the scale is 17.5, the midpoint of surveyed claimants' scores was 22.7 and the average was 21.8. Only eight percent of the scores fell at or below 18, although there were a few scores as low as 13. Thus claimants had, on the whole, quite positive perceptions of their experiences with the compensation programs.

We began our analysis of what factors are associated with more positive perceptions with a series of bivariate analyses. We included a number of factors in these analyses, including variables describing claimant demographics, the type of crime, the compensation process, and the claim outcome. Using variables that were statistically associated with the perception scale when only the two variables were considered, we then conducted multiple regression analyses to further refine the factors associated with perception scores. Unlike bivariate analyses, regression analyses allow us to assess the individual contribution of each of these factors on claimants' perceptions, while accounting for the effects of all the other factors. This procedure avoids erroneously concluding that a variable is important on its own when in fact its importance is only by nature of its relationship to another variable that influences claimants' perceptions.

A few factors were found to be independently associated with the perception scale in significant multiple regression analyses:⁵⁹

- *Processing time*: the more quickly the decision was made, the more positive claimants' perceptions were.
- *Payments according to the claimant*: the more expenses that were paid, according to claimants' report, the more positive the claimants' perceptions of compensation.
- *Claimants' race*: whites had more positive perceptions than members of other racial/ethnic groups.

⁵⁹ $R^2=.23$; $F(4,277)=22.3$, $p<.001$.

- *Claimants' sex*: women had more positive perceptions than men.

The fact that each of these variables was significant in multivariate analyses indicates that each has a unique relationship to perceptions of compensation, regardless of other factors. It is not surprising that claimants who had more of their claims paid and whose claims were processed more quickly thought better of the compensation experience. The findings that women and whites had higher opinions of compensation – regardless of other measured factors -- indicates that programs may wish to examine ways in which policies or procedures might be developed to work better for men and members of minority racial/ethnic groups.

Variables which were significantly associated with perceptions of compensation in bivariate analyses, but not in multivariate analyses, include:

- The type of crime (homicide, assault, sexual assault, drunk driving crashes, or robbery/burglary/theft).
- Whether the claim was for a workplace crime or not.
- Whether the claim was approved or denied.
- Claimants' age.

The fact that these variables were significant in bivariate but not multivariate analyses indicates that their apparent relationship with perceptions of compensation is actually due to their relationship with other variables which are uniquely associated with perceptions of compensation. For example, the approved/denied decision is certainly related to how many claims are paid, and the latter seems to be the important issue for claimants.

Other factors were included in bivariate analyses but were not significantly associated with claimants' perceptions of compensation:

- Amount of claimants' out-of-pocket expenses.
- Total amount of payments made.
- Type of agency referring claimant to compensation (several types of nonprofits and several types of public agencies).
- Whether the claimant received help with the claim.
- How soon after the crime the claimant learned about compensation.
- Whether the claim was for a gun-related crime or not.
- Whether the claim was for a crime of family violence or not.

INTEGRATION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON VICTIM COMPENSATION

Compensation programs make payments to victims, their survivors, or those who have provided services (such as hospitals, mental health counselors, or funeral homes) necessitated by crime. Federal allocations have exceeded \$1 billion from 1986 to 2002, with annual amounts increasing by about 400 percent over this period. In 2002, the average allocation to states was \$1.7 million, and the median amount was \$630,000. Allocations for FY 2003 will rise sharply from 2002, since the federal payout formula – a percentage of state expenditures – increased by half, from 40 percent of state expenditures to 60 percent, under the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001.

The Use of Compensation Funds

Both federal and state laws and guidelines govern how compensation funds are used. OVC guidelines provide that federal funds are for victims of state and federal violent crimes with injury (physical or otherwise, at each state's discretion), and for certain counseling services to victims of nonviolent crimes. Federal funds may be used for medical/dental expenses, mental health counseling, funeral and burial costs, economic support (lost wages and loss of support), and crime scene clean-up expenses, but not for property losses. Compensation programs must promote victim cooperation with the reasonable requests of law enforcement authorities, and may not deny compensation because of a victim's relationship with the offender, except to prevent unjust enrichment of the offender.

The states stipulate further that compensation may be denied to victims whose "contributory misconduct" played a role in the crime. All states treat compensation as the payer of last resort, so that all other means of meeting crime-related expenses must be exhausted for compensation to be awarded. The states also impose claim filing and law enforcement reporting (to document that a crime occurred and to encourage cooperation with the justice system) requirements, but the specifics of these requirements vary from state to state. States also vary on the types of losses that are eligible for compensation, with some states going far beyond federal provisions to cover a wide variety of crime-related expenses (such as moving expenses, replacement services, travel expenses, rehabilitation services, attorney fees, some property expenses, and pain and suffering in three states).

Compensation funds are used mostly to pay the types of expenses provided under federal guidelines. In 2001, nearly half (47 percent) of compensation awards, averaging across states, were for medical/dental expenses. Economic support (lost wages and loss of support) accounted for 20 percent of payments, and funeral/burial expenses averaged 13 percent. Mental health expenses averaged nine percent of payments. One-third of the states use compensation funds to pay for sexual assault forensic exams. Only eight percent of payments, on average, are for "other" types of expenses allowed by state regulations. These are cross-state averages; the exact amounts do of course vary a great deal from state to state.

Compensation serves victims of a broad range of crimes, with a heavy emphasis on violent crimes. The states average 55 percent of awards for assaults, including both domestic and non-domestic assaults.⁶⁰ Homicide accounts for 18 percent of awards across the states, on average. Five percent of compensation funds are spent on sexual assault claims, averaging across states, and another eight percent are spent on child abuse. Drunk driving claims account for an average of four percent of state payments; robbery accounts for two percent; and other crime types receive eight percent of payments. Again, the exact distribution of funds across crime types varies a good deal from state to state.

All but two states impose a cap on the amount that can be paid to claimants, and many states have caps on categories of expenses within the overall amount (such as medical, lost wages, and so on). The overall caps vary widely but average around \$35,000 (the extremes are \$5,000 and \$180,000). Only catastrophic injury claims come near the maximums; the average claim is about \$2,800 per claim across states. In 2001, the states and territories paid a total of \$367.5 million in over 147,000 claims.

Program Standards and Goals

In 1996 the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards (NACVCB) developed standards for program operations in four key areas. These include:

- Outreach, training, and communication to recruit eligible claims from a broad range of victims, and to work effectively with victims and advocates in the claims process.
- Expeditious and accurate claims processing, so that eligible victims may receive funds promptly and in accordance with compensation regulations.
- Good decision-making on claims, to ensure that the mission of serving crime victims is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
- Sound financial planning to promote long-term financial stability while paying claims as fully as regulations allow.

OVC sponsored a broad-based and wide-ranging examination of the victim service field, including victim compensation, which produced the landmark *New Directions From the Field: Victims' Rights and Services for the 21st Century* (OVC, 1998). In this work OVC made similar recommendations for program management, and additional recommendations to improve coordination with victim assistance programs, and to expand benefits and reduce requirements.

These earlier efforts helped to provide a framework from which we approached our task of describing and evaluating how well policies and operations function to serve victims, and to offer recommendations for future developments. The following sections integrate the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from the various research activities we implemented – the national survey of all state compensation administrators in 1999; two rounds of site visits for in-

⁶⁰ Statistics on the numbers of claim paid indicate that 18 percent of claims are for domestic violence-related crime.

depth analyses of compensation in six states through interviews with program administrators and staff, members of oversight bodies, advocacy groups, and direct service providers; focus groups with clients of VOCA assistance programs, in which compensation issues were discussed; and a survey of over 450 compensation claimants to get the clients' perspectives. The presentation is organized around major themes of program policies and operations.

The Mission of Compensation Programs

Compensation programs have a dual mission: to meet victims' financial needs as fully as possible, while also complying with regulations limiting payments to certain conditions and guarding against misuse of public funds through fraud or abuse. Our administrator survey and site visit interviews indicated that many programs are adopting a client-service orientation, emphasizing the goal of meeting victims' needs more completely by identifying obstacles and developing innovative solutions. Program requirements, such as law enforcement reporting or claim filing deadlines, are being relaxed to allow more victims to be served more completely. Some states will allow reports to other agencies, in order to verify that the crime occurred while still serving victims who are reluctant to report to law enforcement. Claim filing deadlines can be waived under certain circumstances that may delay victims' ability to file for compensation, such as long period of secrecy often surrounding chronic crimes occurring during childhood. Cumbersome case processing procedures, such as verification requirements, are being streamlined to serve victims better. For example, some states are being more proactive in their attempts to obtain verifications necessary to comply with program regulations, and have consequently seen an increase in the number of claims approved for payment and a decrease in the time it takes to process those claims. Some states are raising overall or categorical payment caps to better meet victims' needs. One area in which cap increases may be particularly needed is funeral/burial costs, since these expenses may come closest to program caps.

These efforts are paying off in high levels of client satisfaction. Our survey of claimants found that they were generally satisfied with the process and outcome of their experiences of compensation programs; the average score on a satisfaction scale ranging from 12 to 24 was 21.8. Claimants with the most positive perceptions of the compensation experience were those whose claims were processed more quickly, and with more claimed expenses paid. White female claimants were also more satisfied than male or minority claimants, even accounting for the effects of other factors associated with the claim. This finding seems worthy of further examination.

Financial Planning

Since 1997 OVC has allowed a four-year obligation period, so that compensation administrators have the year of award plus the following three years to spend federal funds. Our 1999 survey found that many state administrators make use of this flexibility, and are able to expend the funds during this period. This provision is likely to become even more useful in the immediate future, when FY 2003 allocations from OVC rise sharply from FY 2002 allocations, because of the recent change in the payout formula. However, some states which had been in

sound financial health in the late 1990's are now finding themselves facing challenges to their fiscal stability. In more recent years many states have developed severe budget crises, which may make compensation funds potentially open to "raids" by state legislatures to fund other types of programs. In addition, crime rates seem to be rising again after a ten-year decrease, healthcare costs are increasing rapidly, and public and private insurance coverage is less likely to meet costs (NACVCB, 2002). It will be critical for compensation programs to protect their allocations and continue to grow the programs, so that they can continue to fulfill their mission of meeting crime victims' financial needs.

Program Management

While the goal of compensation is to provide payments for crime-related expenses, some funds must be used to run the programs if they are to be well-run. OVC guidelines allow state administrators to use up to five percent of their federal allocation for administrative activities, and support for these activities may be available from state funds as well. Our 1999 survey found that about half the administrators used this allowance to its fullest extent, but the other half did not make use of it or made very little use. Site visit interviews shed some light on this finding: those who did not use the federal allowance may have had support from other sources, they may have felt that diverting funds from direct payments would be a political misstep, or they may have felt that all funds were desperately needed for payments.

The administrators' survey and site visit interviews indicated that administrative activities generally focus on "basic" activities such as staffing, training, and office equipment. More "advanced" administrative activities, such as strategic planning, needs assessments, coordination, and the development of operational manuals and technology, are less widely in use (although there are of course exceptions). Those states that did undertake these activities found them to be very useful.

More administrative activities and more advanced administrative activities could benefit compensation programs and the victims they serve. While the overall federal allocation for 2003 will increase by about 50 percent, the proportion of funds that can be used for administrative activities will remain stable at five percent. The actual amount of funds available for administration will increase when the overall allocation increases, but the percentage remains stable at five percent rather than increasing proportionately to 7.5 percent. This means that states will have more funds to manage with only the same proportion of administrative funds. Some states do use the administrative allowance and find it useful but insufficient; these states may find it even more difficult to improve program operations when they have more funds to award without a proportionate increase in support for program management.

Outreach and Communication

Since victims' compensation is not a household name like workers' compensation is, it is critical for victims and those who work directly with them – law enforcement, prosecutors, advocates, health care providers, counselors, and so on – to be familiar with the compensation

program and how it works. The more familiar they are with compensation, the more likely it is that a larger number of qualified claims will be submitted and benefits paid. Most compensation programs reported providing training to service providers, especially victim advocates and criminal justice personnel. One state, for example, has recently developed a special training unit that offers a number of training opportunities and resources to a wide range of providers. It is important to familiarize new providers with compensation, and it is also important to keep providers abreast of changes in policies and procedures. We visited one state in which a number of policy changes had recently been made to improve client service. However, the providers in that state that we spoke with were not familiar with the changes, so the information they provided to victims was not up-to-date, and victims may not have been as well-served by compensation as they would if their providers were operating on more current information.

Compensation programs may also interact directly with victims. Many programs have toll-free statewide numbers for victims to call, and some have hired staff to serve as victim liaisons. These staff may not only assist victims with the compensation process, but may also provide useful information and referrals to help victims meet other needs. One state reported an innovative approach to working directly with victims, through personal meetings to explain the program's decision and allow opportunity for input when claims are denied for contributory misconduct.

The claimants we surveyed generally reported learning about compensation in a timely manner, but since we only talked to those who did apply for compensation, it is certainly possible that a number of potentially eligible claimants never learned of compensation or learned of it too late to apply. The most common referral sources were victim service programs, the police, and prosecutors, and some victims never access any of these agencies so may not be likely to learn of compensation without direct outreach from compensation programs, or referrals from other providers with whom they do have contact.

The majority of compensation administrators indicated that a number of groups of victims may be underserved, including members of demographic categories and victims of certain types of crimes. Comparisons of characteristics of our survey sample with victimization statistics indicated that victims of assault, younger victims, male victims, and minority victims might be less likely to access compensation than would be expected. It is possible that eligibility criteria may account for these patterns, and these criteria may or may not be amenable to changes designed to reach more of these victims. It is also possible that outreach to these groups could be improved to increase their representation among claims.

Claims Processing

Once a victim learns of compensation, there is a process that must be activated to file for benefits. All states require an application form and the verifications needed to ensure compliance with program regulations. They must document that an eligible type of crime occurred, that the victim's misconduct did not contribute to the crime, that eligible types of

expenses were incurred, that there were no other sources of payments for these expenses, and so on. Victims, and advocates assisting them with the claim, may have to provide police reports, bills for services, insurance statements, employment verifications, death certificates, marriage licenses, children's birth certificates, and other relevant documents. This can be a burdensome process for people traumatized by violent crime and pressured by mounting debts.

State laws or constitutional amendments often require law enforcement or prosecution staff to assist victims with compensation claims, and VOCA-funded assistance providers are mandated to help victims with compensation. About half the claimants in our survey sample received services, often a broad range of different types of help, usually from victim service providers. Despite the fact that half the claimants did not receive assistance with the claim, few claimants reported needing assistance they did not receive. However, with claim approval rates near 90 percent in our survey sample, two-thirds of surveyed claimants still reported a median of \$600 in unrecovered losses. Since many of these losses were for types of expenses covered by compensation, but for which they did not file claims, the claimants may have needed more assistance than they realized.

Claim processing time averaged ten weeks for our survey sample, which is well within recommended timeframes for efficient program operations. Three-quarters of the claimants in our survey indicated that their claim was processed within a reasonable amount of time, and since case processing time was a key determinant of overall satisfaction, this is a strong endorsement of program operations. Streamlined verification procedures are likely to be responsible for shorter processing times, since the verification segment of case processing was reported as the most time-consuming in our survey of state administrators.

Claim Outcomes

Claims can be approved in whole or in part, or denied on any of a number of grounds. In general approval rates are high; they were 87 percent in our survey sample. However, when claims are denied there may be barriers to effectively conveying information to claimants about reasons for denials and appeals options. Our survey found that only half the claimants with full or partial denials reported being given reasons for denials, and 16 percent reported receiving information on the appeals process.

One reason that claims may be denied is contributory misconduct issues. While this is not the most common reason for denials, it is one of the trickiest, since it may require judgments on a case-by-case basis. Our administrator survey found that states' approach to this issue varies considerably, with some states requiring causal connection between the victim's illegal behavior and the crime to justify denials, while other states would deny claims when the victim was engaging in illegal behavior even if it was not causally connected to the crime. Three-quarters of the states have written policies to guide these difficult decisions.

Recommendations for Compensation Program Development

Our research findings indicate that compensation programs are generally functioning in accordance with identified goals and standards. They seem to be performing the most essential activities to promote effective program management and financial planning; outreach and communication; claims processing; and decision-making. Programs place a high priority on serving victims as the underlying mission, and are taking proactive steps to provide high-quality client services in a number of areas. Useful directions for future developments may include:

- *Service expansion.* Many states will have significantly more funding available in FY 2003 and the coming years because of the increase in the federal payout formula. These funds are likely to be badly needed because of rising crime and decreasing insurance coverage to meet increasing health care costs. As long as the funds remain dedicated to victim compensation, programs may be able to continue the trend of increasing caps, expanding benefits, and reducing eligibility criteria to serve victims more completely.
- *Program management.* Advanced administrative activities are very helpful to those programs that have undertaken them. While funding for these activities is likely to continue to be in short supply, those programs that can access such support are likely to benefit from needs assessments, strategic planning, coordination, automation, and related activities. Technical assistance from OVC and others with expertise in these areas may be needed to help administrators explore these new areas in productive ways.
- *Outreach.* Compensation programs provide training and resources to service providers who work directly with victims, in order to cultivate eligible claims and enhance claim processing. Outreach to victim service providers and criminal justice personnel should continue, to orient new staff and to keep existing staff current on policy and program changes. Outreach should also emphasize a broader range of service providers to reach broader groups of victims who may have been historically underserved, including groups who work with racial, ethnic, language, or cultural minorities. Direct communications with victims can also be enhanced by having victim liaisons on compensation program staff, and by innovative approaches to interacting with victims in a sensitive fashion on delicate issues, such as contributory misconduct denials.
- *Claims processing.* Many programs have made great strides to reduce burdens inherent in the application process, such as more proactive verification procedures to increase approval rates and decrease case processing time. Case processing is likely to see further improvements as advocates and other service providers are better trained in compensation policies and procedures, and can provide better assistance to victims.
- *Claims decision-making.* While approval rates are high, special efforts may be needed when claims are denied to help claimants understand why their claims were denied and what their options are. Again, better-informed service providers may be able to assist victims whose claims were denied, so that they can take additional steps if appropriate.

Crime Victims' Assistance

Efforts to assist crime victims with emotional support and system advocacy began as a grassroots movement in the early 1970's (OVC, 1998). The first victim assistance programs in this country, established in 1972, were two rape crisis programs and a crisis intervention program for all crime victims. The first battered women's shelter opened in 1974. These nonprofit community programs were quickly followed by the first criminal justice system-based programs established in prosecutors' and law enforcement offices with federal funds in 1974. A rapid proliferation of local programs as well as the formation of various national nonprofit organizations to assist and advocate for crime victims occurred during the decades since. There are now over 10,000 community programs which provide a very broad range of services to meet victims' physical, financial, emotional, and advocacy needs. There are also victim assistance programs in many law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, and correctional agencies.

During the 1980's and '90's a number of governmental actions helped to stabilize and expand the victim assistance movement. The 1982 Report of the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime highlighted the insufficiency of services for victims, the need for all justice system agencies to respond sensitively to victims, several critical components of victim/witness programs, and the need for federal funding to support victim assistance efforts. The passage of VOCA in 1984, which established the Crime Victims Fund (CVF) to support public and nonprofit victim service providers and established the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) to provide financial and technical support for service providers, marked a major achievement for the victims' movement. Subsequent legislation provided additional support for victim services, including the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, the Public Health and Welfare Act of 1986, the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act of 1984, and the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988. State legislatures have provided legal foundations for justice system agencies to help victims by passing crime victims' bills of rights and state constitutional amendments on victims' rights, and by authorizing state funding to support victim services.

THE USES AND MANAGEMENT OF FEDERAL VOCA ASSISTANCE FUNDS

The purpose of the VOCA victim assistance grant program is to support nonprofit and public-based victim service programs that:

- Respond to the emotional and physical needs of crime victims;
- Assist primary and secondary victims of crime in stabilizing their lives after a victimization;
- Assist victims in understanding and participating in the criminal justice system; and
- Provide victims of crime with a measure of safety and security.

All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the five territories (U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and American Samoa) have received VOCA awards to

help fund local direct service providers, since OVC began making state allocations in 1986. Each state or territory receives a base award supplemented by additional funds allocated on a population basis. OVC encourages state grantees to develop a program funding strategy that considers the range of victim services available, the unmet needs of victims, the demographic profiles of victims, the coordinated and cooperative responses of community organizations, the availability of services to victims throughout the criminal justice process, and the extent to which other sources of service funding are available.

The states competitively award VOCA funds to local organizations. Of the approximately 10,000 local organizations that serve crime victims, VOCA funds help support about 40 percent. Specific victim assistance activities include:

- Crisis counseling
- Follow-up contacts
- Therapy
- Group treatment and support
- Shelter/safehouse
- Information and referral, by phone and in-person
- Criminal justice support and advocacy
- Emergency financial assistance
- Emergency legal advocacy
- Assistance in filing compensation claims
- Personal advocacy
- Other necessary services

Federal guidelines developed by OVC address eligibility of subrecipient agencies and services, and management of the grant program at the state level. VOCA assistance grant subrecipients must:

- Be public non-federal or private nonprofit organizations with a record of providing effective services to victims of crime and of obtaining financial support from other sources. New programs are eligible for funding if they have at least 25 percent of their support from non-federal sources;
- Provide services free of charge to victims (although exceptions are allowed if program income conditions are met);
- Provide a 20 percent non-federal match for VOCA funds (with several exceptions: 5 percent match for Native American groups, and no match for the subrecipients in the territories other than Puerto Rico);
- Inform victims about the compensation program; and

- Use VOCA funds for direct service provision only; other activities may not be supported with VOCA funds.⁶¹

OVC guidelines specify that the state VOCA assistance administrators:

- Must award at least 10 percent of the assistance allocation for services for domestic violence victims; 10 percent for services for sexual assault victims; 10 percent for services for child abuse victims; and 10 percent for services for previously underserved populations;⁶²
- Have the year of award plus the following three years to obligate federal funds. For example, federal fiscal year 1997 funds are available for obligation from October 1, 1996 through September 30, 2000 (federal fiscal years 1997 through 2000);
- May use up to 5 percent of the federal award for administrative purposes⁶³ and 1 percent for training purposes (states must provide a 20 percent match for training fund set-asides);
- Are encouraged to coordinate with the state compensation program and federal agencies within their state; and
- May not use federal funds to supplant state funds otherwise available for victim assistance;

New guidelines are currently under review by OVC. Proposed changes include allowing subgrantees to use VOCA funds for activities to improve coordination with other community service providers, and supporting subgrantees' case management activities. Possible new guidelines would also allow states to make greater use of funds for training, by increasing the training allowance to five percent and expanding the types of training that could be supported.

⁶¹ Non-allowable activities include lobbying; perpetrator rehabilitation; needs assessments, surveys, evaluation, and research; prosecution; fundraising; indirect costs; reimbursing victims for economic loss, medical costs, or relocation expenses; administrative expenses; protocol development; interagency agreements; sending victims to conferences; and crime prevention activities.

⁶² Underserved populations are to be defined by each state, but may include, among others, victims of federal crimes, assault, robbery, gang violence, hate or bias crimes, intoxicated drivers, economic exploitation or fraud, or elder abuse; and survivors of homicide victims. States are also encouraged to develop definitions of underserved victims by the victims' demographic characteristics as well as by type of crime.

⁶³ These funds may be used for program personnel's salary and benefits; consulting fees; indirect costs; audit costs; travel costs for attendance at training conferences; monitoring, evaluating, and providing technical assistance to subrecipients; purchasing equipment and support services; developing strategic plans; conducting surveys and needs assessments; paying costs of producing and distributing program brochures, posters, and other outreach activities; agency membership dues; program enhancements such as toll-free numbers; purchasing special equipment and materials to facilitate service to persons with disabilities; activities to improve coordination among public and private agencies; coordinating and developing protocols, policies, and procedures that promote systemic change in how victims are treated; and providing training to public and private organizations that serve crime victims.

VOCA FUNDING FOR VICTIM ASSISTANCE

From fiscal years 1986 to 2002, a total of over \$2.7 billion has been distributed by OVC to state victim assistance programs. See Figure 1 for year-by-year data. Assistance allocations have increased nine-fold since they were established, from \$41.3 million in 1986 to \$383 million in 2002. Since CVF formula grant funds in excess of those needed to meet the payout for compensation are allocated to assistance, patterns in assistance distributions have been much more dramatic and more in keeping with growth trends of the overall CVF. Assistance allocations nearly doubled from 1986 to 1995, and have nearly tripled in the last seven years alone (from 1996 to 2002). These years have seen considerable fluctuation; assistance funds increased by nearly 60 percent from 1995 to 1996, then more than tripled from 1996 to 1997. The next two years, 1998 and 1999, saw a drop of about 30 percent to 40 percent, although funds were still about three times as high as 1995 levels. The years 2000 to 2002 saw another enormous increase, with assistance allocations 55 percent higher than 1999 allocations, and nearly back up to the record high in 1997. These amount allocated in these years was determined by Congressionally-imposed caps.

The FY 2003 allocation is expected to be about \$356 million, a **seven percent drop** from the amount allocated in FY 2002. This decrease is due to the overall cap for FY 2003 allocations (\$600 million) not being high enough to offset the increased allocations to compensation because of the change in the federal payout formula, along with earmarks and set-asides for child abuse and prevention programs, OVC discretionary spending, funds for FBI and U.S. Attorney's Offices, a federal Victim Notification System, and so on. After the FY 2003 allocations, the amount collected but not allocated is expected to be approximately **\$638 million**.

Other Federal Funding for Victim Assistance

VOCA is not the only federal funding stream for victim service providers (OVC, 1999b). Other major federal sources include the STOP Violence Against Women (STOP VAWA) formula grants administered by the Violence Against Women Office in the U.S. Department of Justice (which, among other purposes, has supported direct services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking since FY1996)⁶⁴; the Preventive Health and Health Services (PHHS) block grants administered by the Centers for Disease Control in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (which has supported rape prevention, education, and public awareness activities and direct services to victims of sexual assault since at least FY1986); the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) grants administered by the Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (which has supported direct services to victims of domestic violence, training and technical assistance, and public awareness and prevention activities since FY 1984); and the Edward

⁶⁴ The Violence Against Women Act also established much smaller discretionary grant programs which may include a direct victim service component, including the STOP Violence Against Indian Women grants, the Rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Enforcement grants, Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies, and the Civil Legal Assistance Program. Other smaller grant programs authorized by VOCA are the Children's Justice Act grants and the Children's Justice Act Tribal Grant Program.

Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance formula grants administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance in the U.S. Department of Justice (which has provided funds to help state and local agencies initiate innovative projects to reduce drug use and violent crime and improve the effectiveness of the justice system under the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988). In addition to federal funding sources, victim service providers may also be supported by state, local, and private funds.

We can obtain a *general* picture of the funding situation for direct victim assistance activities by looking at funding data for the major federal and combined state funding streams for FY1997, the most recent year for which such data are available. VOCA represented approximately 40 percent of all major federal and state funding provided for direct victim assistance that year. This percentage may be larger than usual, since 1997 was the largest year yet for VOCA funds. The figures presented in Table 13 below must be viewed as ballpark estimates of victim service funding, since several funding streams support other purpose areas as well, and exact figures on the amounts spent on victim services alone are not always available.

Table 13. Estimates of Major Federal and State Direct Victim Service Funding for FY1997

Funding Source	FY1997 Approximate Amount for Direct Victim Services	Percent of FY1997 Total
VOCA Victim Assistance	\$397,059,000	40%
STOP VAWA	\$47,000,000 ⁶⁵	5%
PHHS	\$26,250,000 ⁶⁶	3%
FVPSA	\$58,240,000	6%
Byrne	\$12,000,000 ⁶⁷	1%
State Funding (all states combined)	\$454,183,000	45%
Total Federal and State Funding	\$994,732,000	100%

STATE VOCA ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

Performance data on state programs are available on a state-by-state basis, as presented in Table 14. These data were obtained from the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators (NAVAA) (www.navaa.org) and from OVC's website

⁶⁵ A total of \$126 million was allocated to states, which must use at least 25 percent but no more than 50 percent to support direct victim services (25 percent is designated for law enforcement and 25 percent for prosecution). This figure represents 37.5 percent of the total, the midpoint in the states' discretionary range.

⁶⁶ A total of \$35 million was appropriated for FY1997, of which 75 percent -- \$26.25 million -- must be used for direct services, and 25 percent must be used for prevention, education, public awareness, and professional training (OVC, 1999b).

⁶⁷ This is an approximate estimate only. Byrne funds can be used to address 26 purpose areas, one of which is assistance to victims, witnesses, and jurors. Victim service projects could also be classified under other purpose areas as well. This estimate was obtained by the very kind offices of BJA staff, who searched the entire FY1997 database for awards with "victim" in the program title or project title. We gratefully acknowledge their assistance.

(www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/fund/pdfxt/02cvfalloc1.pdf) and OVC staff.⁶⁸ These data profile how VOCA assistance funds are used by the states.

Administrative Agencies. VOCA assistance programs are housed in a broad range of state agencies, including independent agencies, various criminal justice agencies, health and human service agencies, financial administration and grants management agencies, and the governor's office. About half are aligned with compensation programs – 28 states have compensation and assistance programs located within the same state agency, and sometimes within the same or sister offices within the agency. The implications of the type of administrative agency and co-location with the state's compensation program are discussed in the assistance and compensation chapters of this report.

Federal Allocations. OVC allocated just over \$383 million to state assistance programs in FY 2002. Since allocations are based on population size (after a base amount), the more populous states receive larger awards than the less populous states. Awards ranged from American Samoa's \$271,000 to California's \$42.7 million. The average award was \$6.8 million, which is about the amount awarded to Arizona and Minnesota. The median award (the point at which half the states got less and half got more) was \$4.8 million, or about the amount awarded to Connecticut, Oklahoma, and Oregon.

Subgrant Awards. These funds were distributed through a total of over 5,400 awards. States made an average of 98 subgrant awards, with a median of 64 subgrants per state.⁶⁹ The Virgin Islands made a low of four subgrant awards, while Illinois made a high of 386.

Victims Served. Over 3.5 million victims of crime were served by programs receiving VOCA subgrant awards. This averages at nearly 64,000 victims per state, with a midpoint of 38,500 per state.

Victims Served by Type of Crime. Federal guidelines specify that at least ten percent of each year's funds must be awarded for services to victims of domestic violence; ten percent for sexual assault; ten percent for child abuse; and ten percent for "underserved populations," with states to determine what constitutes "underserved." Allocations of the remainder of the funds are at the state's discretion. State-by-state data on awards made in recent years for services to victims of these types of crime are not available. However, data are available on the percent of all victims served by type of crime. While this information gives a general idea of the types of victims being served with VOCA funding, it should not be interpreted as evidence of compliance

⁶⁸ With many thanks to Linda Rost, Chris Farley, and Roy Blocher.

⁶⁹ It should be noted that these figures may not adequately represent awards to community-based providers. Some states may award at least some of their VOCA funds to a state-wide umbrella organization as a pass-through, such as the state's coalition of domestic violence and/or sexual assault service providers, which then make awards to community-based providers. In this case, the state may count the pass-through award as a single award in its report to OVC that forms the basis for these statistics, or it may count the number of awards made by the pass-through organization.

or non-compliance with the funding distribution requirement. It is possible, for example, that relatively few victims of a given type of crime may be served, but they receive more or more expensive types of services, so that the funding distribution requirement is met but is not reflected in the statistics on numbers of victims served.

Bearing this warning in mind, more victims of domestic violence than any other type of crime receive VOCA-funded services. Across the states, just over half of all victims served are victims of domestic violence. This figure ranges from the District of Columbia's 20 percent of victims served to Tennessee's and the Northern Mariana Island's 73 percent.

Victims of adult sexual assault are much fewer in number, at an average of about five percent of all victims served through VOCA awards. This ranges from Guam's .36 percent (one-third of one percent) to New Jersey's 26 percent. Sexual assault victims represent ten percent or less of all victims served in 50 of the 56 states and territories.

Child abuse victims represent between ten and 15 percent of all victims served. This varies significantly across states. Child abuse victims may be as few as five percent of victims served (in the District of Columbia, New Jersey, and South Carolina) or as many as 37 percent (in Maine). Child abuse victims are less than ten percent of all victims served in one-third of the states and territories (19 of 56), and ten percent or more in the remaining two-thirds.

The other types of crime presented in Table 14 may all fall within the "underserved populations" category. Before presenting these statistics, it is worthwhile to repeat here that VOCA is far from the only source of funding for victim services, and just because few or no victims of a certain type of crime may receive VOCA-funded services in a given state does not mean that few or no of these victims are receiving any services.

Five percent of all victims served are victims of assault, ranging from the District of Columbia's .10 percent (one-tenth of one percent) to Arkansas's 21 percent. Assault victims represent ten percent or less of all victims served in 51 of the 56 states and territories. Homicide survivors are about three percent of all victims served, ranging from none in the Northern Mariana Islands to 58 percent in the District of Columbia (but five percent or less in 51 of the 56 states and territories). Drunk driving victims represent only one percent of all victims served, and are not present in significant numbers in any states (the range is no such victims in Alaska, the District of Columbia, and the Northern Mariana Islands, to 6 percent of California's victims). Robbery victims also represent a very small percentage of all victims served, averaging two percent and ranging from none in five states and territories (Maine, Oregon, Rhode Island, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands) to ten percent in Kansas (only in Michigan and Kansas are robbery victims more than five percent of all victims served). Finally, victims of "other" types of crime – which include elder abuse, adults molested as children, and other crimes – are an average of 17 percent of all victims served. This ranges from South Dakota's one percent to South Carolina's 64 percent. Victims of "other" types of crime represent 20 percent or more of

all victims served in one-third of the states and territories (33 percent). Since this number is rather large, it may be useful in the future to provide more detailed information on what comprises the “other” category.

Types of Services Provided. National statistics aggregated from the states’ and territories’ Subgrant Award Reports and presented on OVC’s website (www.oojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/fund) illustrate the types of VOCA-funded services provided to victims. These statistics are presented as the number of victims who receive each type of service. Since many victims receive multiple types of services, the percentages across service types add up to much more than 100 percent. In order of prevalence, VOCA-funded service programs provide victims with:

- Telephone information and referral 69 percent of victims
- In-person information and referral 51 percent
- Criminal justice system advocacy and support 51 percent
- Follow-up contacts 50 percent
- Crisis counseling 41 percent
- Other types of services 37 percent
- Personal advocacy 32 percent
- Assistance in filing compensation claims 20 percent
- Group treatment and support 13 percent
- Shelter and safehouse 13 percent
- Emergency legal advocacy 12 percent
- Therapy 8 percent
- Emergency financial assistance 5 percent

Table 14. Performance Data on State Assistance Programs, FY 2001

State	Administrative agency	FY 2002 VOCA Allocation	Number Sub-grants Awarded	Number Victims Served	Percent of Victims Served By Type of Crime							
					Domestic Violence	Adult Sexual Assault	Child Physical and Sexual Abuse	Assault	Homicide	DWI/DUI	Robbery	Other ¹
Alabama	Office of Victim Assistance, Attorney General's Office	\$6,042,000	43	39,916	62%	5%	22%	2%	2%	1%	0%	5%
Alaska	Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Department of Public Safety	\$1,281,000	8	2,850	62%	12%	8%	3%	4%	0%	2%	8%
Arizona	Victims' Rights and Assistance Program, Office of the Attorney General	\$6,894,000	228	84,353	50%	4%	11%	4%	3%	3%	1%	24%
Arkansas	Department of Finance and Administration	\$3,831,000	71	17,074	49%	6%	11%	21%	2%	3%	5%	2%
California	Victim/Witness Assistance Program, Governor's Office of Criminal Justice Planning	\$42,709,000	300	283,030	58%	10%	9%	5%	4%	6%	2%	6%
Colorado	Office for Victims Programs, Department of Public Safety, Division of Criminal Justice	\$5,860,000	294	69,479	49%	3%	14%	10%	2%	1%	3%	19%
Connecticut	Office of Victim Services, Judicial Branch	\$4,744,000	28	32,506	66%	8%	11%	3%	1%	1%	1%	8%
Delaware	Criminal Justice Council	\$1,476,000	34	2,900	64%	9%	7%	3%	0%	0%	1%	15%
District of Columbia	Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice	\$1,213,000	12	9,762	20%	6%	5%	0%	58%	0%	0%	10%
Florida	Division of Victim Services, Attorney General's Office	\$20,417,000	274	204,511	54%	3%	15%	6%	2%	1%	4%	15%
Georgia	Office for Victims of Crime, Criminal Justice Coordinating Council	\$10,702,000	135	154,714	48%	3%	12%	11%	2%	1%	5%	19%
Hawaii	Crime Prevention and Justice Assistance Division, Department of the Attorney General	\$2,010,000	15	10,836	45%	10%	16%	5%	1%	2%	0%	22%
Idaho	Council on Domestic Violence and Victim Assistance	\$2,112,000	24	8,856	50%	4%	15%	3%	0%	2%	4%	21%
Illinois	Criminal Justice Information Authority	\$15,976,000	386	89,639	65%	7%	7%	1%	1%	1%	2%	16%
Indiana	Victim Services Division, Indiana Criminal Justice Institute	\$8,077,000	176	103,626	38%	4%	11%	6%	2%	3%	5%	31%

¹ Includes elder abuse, adults molested as children, others

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State	Administrative agency	FY 2002 VOCA Allocation	Number Sub-grants Awarded	Number Victims Served	Percent of Victims Served By Type of Crime							
					Domestic Violence	Adult Sexual Assault	Child Physical and Sexual Abuse	Assault	Homicide	DWI/DUI	Robbery	Other ¹
Iowa	Crime Victims Assistance Division, Office of the Attorney General	\$4,147,000	50	7,646	70%	5%	9%	7%	2%	1%	1%	4%
Kansas	Crime Victims' Rights Division, Attorney General's Office	\$3,850,000	45	44,072	46%	5%	7%	2%	2%	3%	10%	26%
Kentucky	Justice Cabinet	\$5,537,000	82	45,749	49%	5%	20%	6%	1%	1%	2%	16%
Louisiana	Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Criminal Justice	\$6,069,000	103	54,815	24%	4%	11%	3%	2%	1%	1%	53%
Maine	Victim Assistance, Department of Human Services	\$2,089,000	33	8,143	44%	9%	37%	1%	1%	0%	0%	8%
Maryland	The Victims of Crime Assistance Program, Office of Victim Services, Department of Human Resources	\$7,100,000	67	35,969	38%	4%	27%	3%	2%	0%	2%	23%
Massachusetts	Office for Victim Assistance	\$8,412,000	105	35,715	59%	5%	13%	7%	4%	1%	2%	9%
Michigan	Crime Victim Services Commission, Department of Health	\$12,885,000	95	116,707	56%	3%	9%	13%	9%	1%	6%	2%
Minnesota	Center for Crime Victim Services, Department of Public Safety	\$6,630,000	148	168,994	70%	2%	7%	3%	0%	1%	0%	16%
Mississippi	Victims of Crime Act Program, Office of Justice Programs, Division of Public Safety Planning, Department of Public Safety	\$4,045,000	42	18,216	47%	7%	20%	6%	11%	2%	4%	4%
Missouri	Department of Public Safety	\$7,472,323	74	46,006	60%	3%	7%	6%	2%	2%	2%	18%
Montana	Board of Crime Control, Department of Justice	\$1,624,000	42	16,634	66%	6%	13%	5%	1%	0%	2%	8%
Nebraska	Victim Assistance Program, Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, Department of Corrections Services	\$2,632,000	37	52,579	47%	6%	10%	6%	1%	0%	1%	28%
Nevada	Department of Human Resources	\$2,990,000	33	18,789	61%	5%	8%	3%	1%	1%	1%	21%
New Hampshire	Victims' Assistance Commission, Department of Justice	\$2,040,000	50	14,438	58%	6%	16%	2%	1%	4%	1%	11%
New Jersey	State Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy, Division of Criminal Justice, Department of Law and Public Safety	\$10,986,000	60	89,337	36%	26%	5%	6%	3%	4%	3%	18%
New Mexico	Crime Victims Reparation Commission	\$2,767,000	97	21,399	51%	7%	13%	6%	3%	2%	1%	16%

Table 14. Performance Data on State Assistance Programs, FY 2001

State	Administrative agency	FY 2002 VOCA Allocation	Number Sub-grants Awarded	Number Victims Served	Percent of Victims Served By Type of Crime							
					Domestic Violence	Adult Sexual Assault	Child Physical and Sexual Abuse	Assault	Homicide	DWI/DUI	Robbery	Other ¹
New York	State Crime Victims Board	\$24,148,000	186	228,851	47%	8%	15%	10%	4%	1%	3%	12%
North Carolina	Victims' Services Committee, Governor's Crime Commission, Department of Crime Control and Public Safety	\$10,531,000	106	58,623	51%	4%	11%	4%	1%	0%	1%	27%
North Dakota	Victim Assistance Programs, Department of Corrections	\$1,300,000	35	4,154	59%	4%	10%	9%	1%	0%	1%	15%
Ohio	Office of the Attorney General	\$14,648,000	322	243,600	45%	5%	9%	11%	1%	1%	4%	23%
Oklahoma	Victim Services Division, District Attorneys Council	\$4,800,000	96	58,036	48%	5%	14%	11%	6%	1%	3%	13%
Oregon	Crime Victims' Assistance Section, Department of Justice	\$4,764,000	135	93,046	45%	7%	10%	3%	8%	1%	0%	27%
Pennsylvania	Victim/Witness Assistance Program, Bureau of Victim Services, Commission on Crime and Delinquency	\$15,804,000	128	131,276	51%	7%	9%	9%	3%	4%	4%	13%
Rhode Island	Governor's Justice Commission	\$1,806,000	28	11,275	72%	3%	17%	1%	0%	1%	0%	6%
South Carolina	Victims of Crime Grant Program, Office of Justice Programs, Department of Public Safety	\$5,500,000	110	64,924	26%	2%	5%	2%	0%	0%	0%	64%
South Dakota	Victim Services, Department of Social Services	\$1,441,000	41	11,364	80%	3%	11%	5%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Tennessee	Office of Criminal Justice Programs, Division of Resource Development and Support, Department of Financial Administration	\$7,590,000	111	66,519	73%	3%	8%	2%	2%	0%	1%	10%
Texas	Office of the Governor	\$26,485,000	357	425,784	48%	4%	14%	8%	2%	3%	1%	19%
Utah	Office of Crime Victim Reparations, Commission on Criminal & Juvenile Justice	\$3,283,000	56	56,313	59%	3%	14%	5%	1%	1%	1%	16%
Vermont	Center for Crime Victim Services	\$1,259,000	26	10,101	69%	9%	9%	5%	3%	2%	1%	3%
Virginia	Victim Services Section, Department of Criminal Justice Services	\$9,321,000	179	40,855	22%	12%	20%	9%	1%	0%	1%	35%
Washington	Department of Social & Health Services	\$7,845,000	121	41,542	72%	5%	13%	2%	1%	0%	1%	7%
West Virginia	Division of Criminal Justice Services, Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety	\$2,753,000	47	32,395	49%	4%	9%	5%	1%	2%	4%	27%

Table 14. Performance Data on State Assistance Programs, FY 2001

State	Administrative agency	FY 2002 VOCA Allocation	Number Sub-grants Awarded	Number Victims Served	Percent of Victims Served By Type of Crime							
					Domestic Violence	Adult Sexual Assault	Child Physical and Sexual Abuse	Assault	Homicide	DWI/DUI	Robbery	Other ¹
Wisconsin	Office of Crime Victim Services, Department of Justice	\$7,184,000	74	37,137	42%	7%	16%	5%	5%	1%	4%	21%
Wyoming	Division of Victim Services, Office of the Attorney General	\$1,115,000	37	12,065	26%	2%	7%	6%	1%	3%	3%	52%
American Samoa	Criminal Justice Planning Agency	\$271,000	5	1,684	12%	2%	57%	16%	1%	3%	1%	8%
Guam	Department of Law	\$393,000	7	6,590	45%	0%	30%	1%	2%	1%	0%	21%
Northern Mariana Islands	Criminal Justice Planning Agency	\$286,000	7	1,143	73%	3%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%
Puerto Rico	Department of Justice	\$5,246,000	59	20,479	67%	2%	15%	1%	1%	0%	1%	14%
Virgin Islands	Department of Criminal Justice Services, Law Enforcement Planning Commission	\$635,000	4	2,505	61%	5%	19%	3%	1%	1%	2%	9%
Total		\$383,027,323	5468	3,569,521	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mean		\$6,839,774	98	63,741	52%	6%	14%	5%	3%	1%	2%	17%
Median		\$4,782,000	64	38,527	51%	5%	11%	5%	2%	1%	1%	16%

POLICY AND PRACTICE ISSUES IN STATE VOCA ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION

The Office for Victims of Crime sponsored a series of five regional meetings for state VOCA assistance administrators in early 1997. Administrators discussed critical issues in program administration and shared innovative funding strategies and programs. A report on these meetings was issued in April, 1997 (OVC, 1997); critical issues are summarized below.

- *Funding Fluctuations and Long-Range Planning.* The most critical issue facing state administrators was how to respond to fluctuations in funding levels from year to year. The challenge was to find ways to fund needed, high-quality services in a timely fashion, and support the development of innovations in victim assistance, while trying to maintain program stability over time. OVC strongly recommends that states use the four-year obligation period for VOCA awards to engage in long-range programmatic and financial planning, with multi-year strategies for disbursement of funds, so that local programs can share the wealth in a way that stabilizes their core services and allows them to reach out to new victims and/or provide new services.
- *Assessments of Needs and Services.* Central to long-range planning is the identification of unmet victim needs and gaps in services so that strategies to address these gaps and meet these needs can be developed. Many states reported efforts to assess needs and services, including surveys of service providers, task forces of state employees and service providers, focus groups, and “town hall” meetings.
- *Use of Administrative Funds.* States felt that being able to use some of the VOCA award for administrative purposes was helpful, although the 5 percent allowance is often insufficient to pay the actual cost of administering the program. States reported using the administrative allowance to pay for staffing, monitoring and providing technical assistance to subrecipients, and for purchasing technology.
- *Outreach to Underserved Victims.* OVC encourages states to identify underserved victim groups (as defined by crime type as well as by victim demographics) and the services needed to meet their needs. OVC also encourages states to fund existing services that reach out to the underserved, and to fund the development of new services for the underserved. States reported various types of efforts to identify underserved groups and service gaps, and identified a variety of populations as underserved. While some states reported funding innovative types of victim services to reach these groups, states also pointed out obstacles to the expansion of victim services to reach new types of victims or new geographic areas or to provide new types of services. For one, VOCA’s “record of service” requirement may make it difficult for very new programs to secure funding. Service providers’ staff salaries are so low and turnover rates so high that efforts to stabilize existing programs may be more pressing than program expansions. It may also be difficult to get new programs started when grantwriting capacity is inadequate and matching funds are unavailable.

- *Outreach to Victim Service Providers.* States routinely inform previously-funded providers about VOCA funding opportunities. However, outreach efforts in many states need to be expanded to include other providers who have not received VOCA funding, especially groups that serve underserved populations. Some states report outreach efforts that include use of the Internet and newspaper ads, as well as regional or broadcast training and technical assistance conferences for potential applicants.
- *Coordination of Federal Funding Streams and Reporting Requirements.* Many state administrators expressed a need for more information on awards from other federal funding sources (such as STOP VAWA, FVPSA, PHHS, and Byrne grant programs). Some states have developed coordination and information-sharing mechanisms. State administrators voiced a strong need for unified federal reporting forms for victim service providers. OVC has been coordinating a multi-agency effort to develop a single performance report for service providers who receive funding from any federal source. The goal of this ongoing effort is to reduce the reporting burden on providers who are funded by multiple sources and must report service activities and statistics for each grant separately.
- *Advisory Boards and Councils.* Oversight bodies can be very helpful in establishing funding priorities, reaching out to new programs and underserved victims, and selecting applications for funding. Fifteen states reported having such bodies, some required by statutory authority, and others by policy. Boards often include victim advocates, service providers, and sometimes victims themselves.
- *Implementing Victims' Rights Legislation.* As of the 1997 OVC report, nearly every state had statutory victims' bills of rights and over half the states had constitutional amendments on victims' rights. However, the implementation of victims' rights (usually through prosecutor-based victim/witness advocates) varied widely from state to state; some states had advocates in only a few of the prosecutors' offices. All states felt there was a need to improve services for victims of juvenile offenders. Some states reported special initiatives to implement victims' rights, including a statewide ombudsman program with a toll-free number for victims, the use of Judicial District Rights Commissions, and corrections-based victim notification systems.
- *State Training Efforts.* States may use up to 1 percent of their assistance allocation for training of victim service providers and allied professionals, with a 20 percent match required. Some states require VOCA subrecipient agency staff to receive training as a grant condition, some have established mentoring programs, and others are developing certification programs for victim service providers.
- *State 800 Numbers.* Almost half the states reported that toll-free services are available for victims to receive information about and referrals to local providers. Some of these are limited to certain victim groups, such as victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or child abuse.
- *Technology.* All states expressed a critical need for information on how computer technology can be used in victim notification systems, implementation of victims' rights, data collection and reporting efforts, case management, communication

between the state administrator and local programs, and victim referrals among providers across the state. Administrators need information on how to purchase, implement, and operate technology systems, and how to evaluate vendors. In addition to computer systems, some states have used VOCA funds to distribute cellular phones to domestic violence victims for contacting law enforcement in an emergency.

PRIOR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS

New Directions (OVC, 1998) offers a number of recommendations for further development of the victim assistance field. While these recommendations do not address the management of grant programs at the state level *per se*, they do suggest ways in which state grant administrators can prioritize funding to support the development of the victim services field.

- *Needs Assessments and Service Development.* Communities should undertake comprehensive efforts to identify groups of underserved victims, what their needs are, how their needs can best be addressed, and barriers to accessing services. Efforts to identify needs and develop and implement services should include input from multidisciplinary partnerships as well as from crime victims, should emphasize cultural competency, and should strive to create a comprehensive network of services within communities. Interagency response protocols should be developed and implemented for assisting all types of victims, but especially children, the elderly, and victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- *Services to Address Special Needs.* Each state should develop a statewide crisis response team to assist communities experiencing incidents of mass violence or terrorism. Local and regional teams should also be developed. The creation of a national office for community crisis response should be considered, and should involve the Federal Emergency Management Agency as well as the Justice Department.
- *A national 24-hour hotline for crisis intervention, and statewide toll-free numbers to provide information and referrals, should be established to assist victims of all types of crime.* This would be a valuable resource to victims in rural areas with few local services, and to victims of crimes not currently served by hotlines (most hotlines serve domestic violence or sexual assault victims only).
- *Victim services should also focus more on victims with disabilities.* Research is needed to determine the extent of victimization against the disabled, and to guide prevention efforts and strategies to increase reporting. Service providers need more training on reaching and serving victims with disabilities, and accessible services tailored to disabled victims' unique needs should be developed and implemented.
- *Victim service providers should be trained to assist crime victims who interact with the media.* *New Directions* recommends utilizing the National Center for Victims of Crime's enumeration of rights for victims who choose to deal with the media. Providers who are sophisticated in media relations can help victims have a more

positive experience with media coverage while improving their own professional relationships with the media.

- *Public Awareness Activities.* Victim service providers should undertake campaigns to increase public awareness of victimization issues, knowledge about services available, and public support for victim services. These efforts may also increase crime reporting and decrease the stigma of victimization. These initiatives should address a broad range of crime types, and should be particularly active during the National Crime Victims' Rights Week in April.
- *Program Standards, Accreditation, and Ethics.* There should be national or consistent state standards of services, such as those developed by NOVA, and accreditation procedures for provider programs to ensure quality and consistency across programs. The basic elements of victim services recommended by NOVA include crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy, support during criminal investigation, support during prosecution and case disposition, support after case disposition, training for allied professionals, violence and substance abuse prevention activities, and public education activities. While some states have developed service standards, they vary from state to state. A code of ethics should also be instituted that addresses the provider's relationship with victims, colleagues, other professionals, and the public; and rules for professional conduct. Some advocacy groups (i.e., NOVA and MADD) have developed a model code of ethics, and some states have adopted ethical codes. These efforts should be expanded, and some consistency across states should be developed through a national commission to develop certification and accreditation standards for programs and staff.
- *Staff Training and Certification.* Pre-service and in-service training requirements and certification procedures should be instituted to ensure service quality. Some states have established minimum training requirements, some states require ongoing training as a VOCA grant condition, and some states have established certification procedures which specify training and experience requirements.
- *Use of Technology.* Computer technology, including the Internet and e-mail, can be very useful in making information and counseling services widely and easily available to the public, and in helping providers communicate with each other and with state funding administrators. Cellular telephone technology has been used to provide an extra measure of safety to domestic violence victims by giving them immediate access to law enforcement emergency services. The application of technological developments to victim services should be explored and supported through technical assistance and training. A national center should be created to locate or develop software for local programs to use in case management, internal evaluations, and reporting.
- *Program Evaluation.* Research should be done to evaluate the effectiveness of services, such as individual or group crisis intervention models. Standard evaluation procedures and protocols should be developed for each component of victim services so that programs can measure their own success and areas for future development.

Other resources are also available to help guide the development of victim service. Tome and McGillis (1997) developed a guidebook for planning, implementing, and refining victim service programs. A number of policy and operational areas are discussed, including victim needs assessments, outreach, agency placement, community networks, service provision, staff training and supervision, monitoring and evaluation, and funding issues. The National Victim Assistance Standards Consortium (DeHart, undated) has proposed model standards for programs and providers, including standards for services, coordination, ethics, administration, and evaluation.

OUR EVALUATION OF STATE VOCA ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Previous work identifying important issues and challenges to the field provided a framework for our analyses. Like our approach to studying compensation programs, we performed three major phases of work on VOCA assistance programs. We began with a telephone survey of all state administrators in 1999, to get a broad-based picture of fundamental policy and program issues. We then conducted two waves of site visits to each of six states, for an in depth review of key issues. We met with state administrators, members of oversight bodies, and victim advocacy groups in the first site visits, and with three VOCA-funded direct service providers in each of the six states in the second round of visits. We also conducted focus groups with clients of five of these programs. Finally, we conducted telephone surveys with nearly 600 clients of 17 of these programs, to get their perspectives on services.

The remainder of this chapter presents each phase of the research, concluding with a summary section that integrates the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from all research activities.

THE 1999 SURVEY OF STATE ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATORS

The telephone survey of state administrators in 1999 sought to obtain basic information on a broad range of key policy and practice issues in state assistance program administration. We spoke with all 56 administrators directly in charge of the program, or his or her designee. Findings from this survey are useful for assessing 1999 conditions and comparing these conditions with recommendations for best practices (as discussed previously). The questionnaire is presented in Appendix G; conclusions and recommendations suggested by the results are presented below. More detailed information on the findings is organized by content area, with an italicized summary and recommendations preceding a fuller discussion of the results.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Findings from the administrators' survey, in conjunction with other input from state administrators (i.e., the 1997 regional meetings of administrators), OVC priorities and guidelines, and recommendations from the field (i.e., OVC, 1998), indicate that state VOCA assistance programs are generally functioning well in a number of areas. This is commendable

particularly in light of the difficult funding situation under which programs operate. However, a number of issues related to VOCA assistance program operations and management remain.

- *Funding Allocations:* The most pressing problem facing state administrators was the difficulty of doing long-range planning, given extreme fluctuations in funding levels from year to year. The four-year obligation period certainly helps to relieve pressures on state administrators to distribute a variable amount of funds. The federal caps of the last several years have controlled fluctuations, but have led to a very large amount (about \$638 million) being held for crime victim purposes but not available for allocation. It is critical that policies be developed for putting these funds to work for victims in a timely way and in accordance with the legislative intent of VOCA. These policies should consider the likelihood that Congress will continue imposing annual caps. It may be useful to involve state administrators and other critical stakeholders in policy development efforts.
- *Strategic Planning:* Many states reported doing needs assessments, coordination of funding sources, efforts to increase revenues, and other planning-related activities. But only about half the states reported having a formal strategic plan for victim services funding at the time of our survey. Since this is clearly a priority for OVC, and can be very helpful to administrators in managing a complex grant program with a four-year distribution period for each year's allocation and changing funding levels from year to year, this seems to be an area in which OVC could provide critical support. Efforts to help those states with plans share information on the content of their plans, how they were developed, and how they are implemented could be very useful to those states without such plans.
- *Needs Assessments:* While most states reported conducting needs assessments, their methods varied widely. Knowing what victims' needs are, and which victims and what needs are underserved, is critical for funding decisions. A closer look at how needs assessments are being done, which methods seem more useful than others, and how the results are used could also be very helpful to state administrators.
- *Outreach to Service Providers and Underserved Populations:* As states' ability to do long-range planning improves, additional efforts should be made to reach qualified service providers and victim populations not currently served by VOCA funding. Needs assessments should provide very useful input on these efforts, and partnerships between state administrators and groups which represent underserved populations should be helpful in identifying barriers to service utilization and how to overcome them.
- *Coordination:* Coordination of the many funding sources available to assist victims of crime is very important to eliminate gaps or duplication of services and increase operational efficiency. While coordination mechanisms vary, over three-quarters of the states make an effort to co-track at least some of the major federal victim assistance funding streams, and find these efforts useful. Coordination with the state compensation program is also common, but is mostly limited to training efforts and distributing program materials. Ways in which VOCA and other

assistance administrators, compensation administrators, and federal victim/witness personnel might work together more closely should be identified and supported.

- *Support for Administration and Training:* The administrative allowance can and has been used to support many activities, which OVC and leaders in the field have identified as crucial, such as strategic planning, needs assessments, coordination, and various outreach activities. Use of this allowance seems to be on the rise, and state administrators have expressed the need for greater support for administrative activities. Many administrators would also like to broaden the use of administrative funds to include prevention activities (which would require a legislative change), among others. Training funds are also being put to use, although some administrators would like them to be made more accessible by reducing or eliminating the 20 percent match requirement. Given the gaps remaining between recommended and actual practices, OVC should consider the feasibility of increasing these allowances and opening them up to additional uses.

Responses to Funding Fluctuations

All states saw dramatic fluctuations in their allocations from OVC between 1995 and 2000, when caps were first imposed. Since then allocations have become relatively stable, with moderate increases from 2000 through 2002. However, the 2003 allocations is expected to represent a seven percent decrease from 2002, the first time the allocation has dropped since 1999. Since VOCA funds make up a significant portion of funding for all state and federal victim services, managing uncertainty from year to year proves very challenging to state administrators. Administrators' priorities for managing funding fluctuations indicate a concern with assuring future funding stability while improving core resources for victims and providers. There seems to be less emphasis on long-term commitments or promoting expansions into new areas, due no doubt to the uncertainty of the funding source.

In flush years, specific strategies which half or more of the administrators reported using included carrying over funds to the next year (e.g., states carried over an average of 40 percent of their FY1997 funds into FY1998); funding special technology projects (such as automated victim notification; cell phones or other emergency systems for victims; automated case tracking systems; e-mail systems for service providers; and hiring consultants to assist with technology projects); increasing the salaries or benefits of providers; and making special one-time or supplemental awards. Less utilized strategies, used in under half the states, included guaranteeing multi-year funding for certain programs or projects; developing long-term plans; funding special outreach projects for underserved victims; funding other innovative projects such as restorative justice or ombudsman programs; and funding special coordination projects, such as those to link criminal justice and human service systems.

Administrators' strategies for responding to funding decreases also show a commitment to retaining stability in providers' funding. In lean years, states have most often funded the same programs but at a lower level than they requested, and used held-over funds from previous years. Only a minority of the states have reduced the number of programs funded or obtained state funds to fill in the gaps.

Despite the generally increasing amounts of funding available from the CVF since 1995, nearly three-quarters of the administrators felt that the assistance funds available through their office are insufficient to meet the needs of service providers. A popular strategy to increase revenues is seeking additional state appropriations (although these efforts may not always be successful). Other strategies, used in a minority of the states, include efforts to increase offender fines and fine collection rates. Costs are commonly contained by funding proposals at less than the full level requested, and by helping providers obtain funding from local, private, and other federal sources. A few states reported efforts to be more selective in funding decisions, such as strengthening selection criteria or using evaluation results to guide funding decisions.

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning, or multi-year funding strategies, can be very helpful in managing funding fluctuations and the four-year obligation period allowed under OVC guidelines. While many states are doing planning-related activities such as needs assessments, coordination of funding sources, and efforts to increase revenues, only about half the states reported having a formal strategic plan for victim services funding in 1999. These plans typically covered about four years, which is the obligation period. The plans tend to focus on promoting expansion as well as stabilizing current services (although current funding practices place more emphasis on stabilization). OVC efforts to help states develop strategic plans, in conjunction with efforts to stabilize CVF allocations, could be very useful for promoting both stability and expansion of victim assistance programs.

Strategic plan priorities reported by over three-quarters of the states included reaching new types of victims or areas of the state not currently well-served; stabilizing existing services; and developing new types of services. A minority of states reported service coordination, prevention and public education, and training as priorities of the state's plan for VOCA and other victim services funding. Key justice (i.e., law enforcement, prosecution, and state criminal justice planning agencies) and protective service system personnel, victim advocates/providers, and victims were most often involved in strategic planning. A wide range of staff from other criminal justice agencies, other victim service agencies, and allied professionals were involved in the planning in fewer than half the states.

Use of the Four-Year Obligation Period

The four-year obligation period seems to be a valued tool administrators use to cope with funding fluctuations. Analyses indicate that administrators have availed themselves of the option to spread funds out over a longer time period, so that the subgrant award process has taken increasingly more time in recent years. This is not surprising, since administrators have had more funds to award due to increased allocations in most years as well as more funds held over from previous years.

For FY1995 funds, it took an average of 11 weeks to issue the first award once funds were available for draw-down; this average increased to 18 weeks for FY 1996 and FY1997 funds, and 31 weeks for FY1998 funds. For FY1995 and FY1996, the average length of the funding

distribution process (from issuing the first award to the most recent award) was 26 weeks; the average rose to 56 weeks for FY1997 funds. An average of only 20 weeks is reported for FY1998 funds, but that is due to the very likely possibility that the *most recent* award with FY1998 funds is not the *last* award with these funds, since administrators had another two years to distribute the funds at the time of the interviews.

Needs Assessments

Identifying what services victims need to cope with a criminal victimization and what needs go unmet can be critical information in deciding how to allocate funds. States generally reported taking steps to identify victims' needs and involved at least the core professionals (criminal justice and victim service providers) in these efforts, although methods of needs assessments were varied and often anecdotal.

A large majority of the states (84 percent) reported that there is a process in place to determine the needs of victims across the state. Just over half the states (57 percent) reported using formal needs assessment methods, typically an examination of crime and population statistics, or surveying/interviewing victim service providers or victims. Other assessment methods include drawing feedback from subrecipient site visits and progress reports, advisory councils, and public hearings; and obtaining information during the application process. About three-quarters of the states use an advisory group to oversee the needs assessment process. Personnel involved in the needs assessment process in over half the states include a variety of criminal justice system staff; various victim service providers; mental health care providers; and victims themselves. Members of allied professions or local boards were sometimes but less commonly involved.

Underserved Populations

There is a widespread perception that many groups of victims are underserved, whether groups are defined by type of crime (e.g., victims of elder abuse, hate crime, and property crime) or by victim demographics (e.g., the elderly, residents of remote areas, and ethnic/racial minorities). Greater public education and awareness efforts, more accessibility in service programs, and services to enhance victim safety are needed to address underservice. It may be useful for assistance programs to focus future outreach efforts on working with agencies who represent underserved groups, in order to identify ways to reach them and overcome obstacles to full participation.

Over three-quarters of the administrators thought that there are underserved victims, or those who receive assistance less frequently than expected based on known victimization rates. Victims of elder abuse, hate or bias crime, and property crime such as fraud were thought to be underserved by over half the administrators. Less than half but a significant portion (one-third or more) of the administrators considered victims of gang violence, stalking, drunk driving crashes, adult sexual assault, survivors of homicide, child physical and sexual abuse, robbery, and assault underserved. Reasons for underservice included victims' lack of knowledge about assistance programs, embarrassment, fear of retaliation by the offender, and belief that programs are

available only when the justice system is involved; and the lack of accessibility, or accessibility problems with assistance programs.

We also asked administrators what groups of victims they thought were underserved when group is defined by victims' demographic characteristics. Administrators often identified senior citizens, residents of remote or rural areas, ethnic/racial minorities, non-English speakers, persons with disabilities, gays, and immigrants as underserved. One-quarter of the administrators reported that some areas of their state have no services for crime victims, so victims in these areas may be completely unserved.

The Funding Distribution Process

How the funds are distributed may depend greatly on who finds out about their availability, how applicants are evaluated, and who makes the final funding decisions. Publicity efforts are most commonly targeted at current subrecipients or traditional types of providers. Selections among applicants focus on capacity to provide service and evidence of need. Decision-makers may be administrative agency staff or other personnel, such as advisory board members or state officials.

Current subrecipients are most commonly informed of funding availability (89 percent of the states), although two-thirds of the states also reported notifying a mailing list of all law enforcement, prosecutors, and service providers. General publications, such as newspapers, web pages, newsletters, and state equivalents of the Federal Register, were less frequently used. The large majority (84 percent) of states reported efforts to encourage new applicants. These efforts most frequently included providing information or technical assistance about the application process at state or regional meetings and through telephone consultations; mailing RFPs to all victim service providers in the state; and contacting groups that serve populations vulnerable to crime.

Only 11 percent of the states reported that they funded all applicants at the requested level in the last three years prior to the survey, so the vast majority of states needed to select among applicants. In addition to federal eligibility standards, the most popular funding criteria included the applicant's demonstrated capacity to provide services; evidence of service need; geographic distribution criteria; soundness of the proposal and budget request; and the applicant's ability to coordinate with other providers. Specific requirements in over half the states included mechanisms for community coordination and service referrals; providing victims with information and assistance in compensation applications; setting specific project goals and methods for measuring achievements; making services accessible to disabled victims; ensuring adequate staff training and credentials; and providing information on other funding sources.

States vary a great deal in terms of who is involved in making funding decisions. The staff and director of the administrative agency are most commonly involved in reviewing applications. Advisory boards or proposal review panels are involved in just under half the states. These bodies are typically composed of law enforcement, prosecution, domestic violence

advocates/providers, sexual assault advocates/providers, and state protective services agency staff. The final funding decision is made by staff within the administrative agency in just under half the states, and by decision-makers outside the administrative agency (such as an advisory board or a state official such as the governor or attorney general) in just over half the states. Two-thirds of the states have an appeals process for applicants to contest funding decisions.

Coordination

Coordination of the funding process is very important since VOCA is one of a number of funding sources for service providers. Coordination can help eliminate duplicate funding or gaps in coverage. Coordination with the compensation program is also important to ensure that more of victims' needs are met and to comply with federal requirements that assistance providers help victims with compensation. Most states make an effort to coordinate information on awards from at least the major federal victim assistance funding sources, to identify gaps and duplications and to make funding decisions. Assistance programs coordinate with compensation programs more often through exchange of information than through active collaborative processes. Ways in which VOCA and other assistance administrators, compensation administrators, and federal personnel might work together more closely should be identified and supported.

We asked VOCA administrators about coordination with other federal and state funding sources. One-third of the administrators reported that all victim assistance grants are tracked together; another half reported that some grants are tracked together (most often the federal grants — VOCA, VAWA, PHHS, and/or FVPSA grants). A little under one-quarter of the states reported no co-tracking efforts. The VOCA administrative agency was the most likely party responsible for the tracking in states that track at least some of the grants together. Two-thirds of the states also reported less formal means of information-sharing, most often sharing lists of awards between the VOCA and VAWA administrators. It is not surprising that these two should work together most closely, since these two programs are often administered by staff who work out of the same office, or even the same person, and they may support services for the same victims. Information from formal tracking or less formal information-sharing is most often used to identify gaps and duplications in services, to make funding decisions, and to coordinate service programs.

Assistance providers are required by federal guidelines to refer victims to compensation. State administrators commonly try to facilitate coordination with compensation by inviting compensation staff to train assistance subrecipients, and by having joint training conferences for compensation and assistance staff. Only a minority of the states reported other methods of coordination, such as joint staff meetings or retreats, written reports or memoranda of understanding on coordination, and providing input to each other's planning or decision-making processes. Administrators in over half the states help subrecipients comply with federal requirements by distributing compensation brochures and application forms, and providing training. A minority of the states monitor referrals to compensation through site visits or monitoring, in application and contract requirements, and by checking with compensation administrators to see the origins of the applications. Three-quarters of the assistance

administrators reported providing the compensation program with a statewide directory of service providers.

Services and Oversight of Subrecipients

The majority of states attempt to help subrecipients fulfill their responsibilities, usually by providing training and technical assistance, cluster conferences for subrecipients, and monitoring activities. Monitoring most often involved site visits, audit reports, and desk activities such as phone contacts and review of subrecipients' performance reports. Evaluation activities and application of program standards were not frequently reported. These may be fruitful areas for future development. A significant minority of the states have terminated a few grants for cause during the last several years, usually for non-performance.

Nearly every state administrator reported that they consider it their job to assist subrecipients in fulfilling their grant responsibilities. They provide this assistance by offering training or technical assistance, performing site visits, and monitoring programs through reviewing performance reports. About three-quarters of state administrators have sponsored both statewide and regional meetings (typically annual meetings) for VOCA and other victim assistance subrecipients to gather and share their expertise.

Many states monitor subrecipients through site visits, telephone contacts, written performance reports from subrecipients, and annual audit reports. Fewer than one-quarter of the states use additional methods, such as victim satisfaction surveys, monitoring by state domestic violence or sexual assault coalitions, or application of performance guidelines developed by NOVA or other agencies. Fewer than one-quarter of the states have sponsored any evaluations or reported any evaluations by subrecipients in the last five years prior to the 1999 survey.

It is not uncommon for a state administrator to terminate a grant for cause during the project period; 39 percent of the states reporting doing so since 1996. These states reported an average of about two such terminations. The reasons were most often failure to deliver the promised services and noncompliance with reporting requirements. Less common reasons included false reporting or double billing, change in status from non-profit to for-profit, or bankruptcy of the program.

Use of the Administrative Allowance

States are allowed to use up to five percent of their total allocation for administrative activities, at their discretion. Many of the activities discussed above may be supported from this source. The states have made significant if not always full use of the funds, with an apparent recent increase in level of use. Less than full usage was due to availability of administrative funding from other sources and a more pressing need to award the funds to service providers. The funds have supported many different purposes, usually rated by administrators as extremely useful.

All states have used the administrative allowance, with one-third of the states using the full allowance since the first year it was available, and the other two-thirds using at least some of the

money at least some of the time. Use seems to be growing, with states allocating an average of 3.7 percent of their award in FY1996, 4.0 percent in FY1997, and 4.4 percent in FY1998. Those who have not always made full use of the allowance reported as their reasons that the money was more urgently needed for awards to subrecipients, and that administrative funding has been available elsewhere. States reported using administrative funds for a wide variety of purposes, from supporting basic program functions (staffing, training, subrecipient services, purchasing equipment, developing publications) to more advanced functions such as strategic planning, needs assessments, coordination, and developing automated systems. Nearly all the purposes were rated as moderately or extremely useful.

Training

OVC guidelines also allow administrators to reserve one percent of their total award for training projects, with a 20 percent match. As with the administrative allowance, the training funds have not always been used to their fullest extent, due to other sources and urgent needs for subrecipient awards, but usage seems to be increasing. State funds and VAWA funds have been used to support training efforts instead (this is one of STOP VAWA's explicit purposes). This suggests that VOCA training funds might be targeted to providers who serve other types of victims. Nearly all the states have provided training, and have reached a wide-ranging audience in which criminal justice staff and victim service providers are featured most prominently. Many topics have been covered in this training.

A wide range of justice system professionals, including law enforcement, prosecution, probation/parole, judges, and corrections have received training in at least half the states. Among a number of victim service providers, only federal victim/witness coordinators received training in fewer than half the states.⁷⁰ Nearly all states trained domestic violence and sexual assault advocates/providers, and two-thirds or more also trained police- and prosecution-based victim/witness staff; MADD, groups for survivors of homicide, and other grassroots groups; and protective service agencies. Allied professionals most likely to receive training were health care providers, mental health care providers, and compensation staff. Training has most often been available through statewide or regional conferences, or by allowing subrecipients to use their awards to attend OVC's National Victim Assistance Academy and NOVA's annual conferences.

Training topics included substantive areas such as crisis intervention, victims' legal rights, victims' compensation, counseling skills, and working with special groups of victims; as well as procedural areas such as interagency collaboration, grant administration, program management, outreach, use of technology, and working with the media.

Interactions with the Federal Government

Many states have made use of OVC's National Victim Assistance Academy and the Resource Center and found them valuable resources. Other federal resources used by state administrators include regional conferences, the Training and Technical Assistance Center, and OVC's website and publications. The majority of states have

⁷⁰ OVC provides other means for training federal personnel.

found the federal reporting forms helpful in assessing funding patterns, gaps, and duplications; helpful for legislative reporting and responding to requests; and helpful in assessing programs' level of success. However, nearly two-thirds of the states would like to see changes in the forms to make definitions more specific and include examples, and to eliminate duplication of data across the subgrant award and fiscal reporting forms.

Administrators' Recommendations

In response to a request for general comments on the federal guidelines and legislation, or any other concerns about the federal or state VOCA program, administrators offered several observations. Many administrators would like to broaden the use of funds to include such activities as prevention, overhead costs, and batterer programs. Many would also like to see the guidelines clarified and simplified. For example, there is some confusion as to whether OVC guidelines prohibit providers from charging fees for any services, or only for VOCA-funded services. Administrators also expressed a desire for an increase in the administrative allowance and steps to make the training allowance more accessible, such as discontinuing or changing the matching requirement. Finally, a number of administrators emphasized that funding fluctuations present a continual management problem, and should be addressed through efforts to smooth funding levels.

IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF VOCA VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

This section builds on the findings from the national survey of state assistance administrators with detailed information from site visits to six states, in which we interviewed state program administrators and staff, members of program oversight bodies, victim advocates, and VOCA-funded victim service providers (three in each of the six states). We also conducted focus groups with clients of several VOCA-funded programs.

The six states – California, Idaho, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Vermont, and Wisconsin – were selected in a meeting of the evaluation team, the evaluation's advisory panelists, and NIJ and OVC staff. The overarching goal was to choose a set of states that would represent the nation in general, by obtaining diversity on a variety of factors. We selected states in various regions of the nation; states that include large urban areas as well as states that are primarily rural; large, densely populated states as well as states that are smaller and more sparsely populated; and states whose populations represent a broad range of demographics.

As detailed in the state profiles⁷¹ presented on the following pages, these six states also provide variety in the type of agency administering the VOCA assistance program; the degree of co-location with the compensation program and other funding streams for victim assistance; funding levels from VOCA and other sources; and various program performance indicators such as subgrants awarded and victims served.

⁷¹ Information for the state profiles came from the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators (www.navaa.org) and from statistics the states reported to OVC in annual Subgrant Award Reports (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/funds).

Following the state profiles are charts profiling the 18 programs we visited in these states. These programs were selected to provide diversity on administrative location (private non-profit versus public-based); victims served in terms of types of crime; client demographics (including members of racial/ethnic minorities, non-English-speakers, juveniles, and senior citizens); geographic location of the service area (urban, suburban, and rural); and types of services provided to victims.

Site visits were conducted in two phases: the first was from February, 2000 to July, 2000, and the second was from October, 2000 to July, 2001. In the first phase, we spoke with state program administrators and staff, members of the programs' oversight bodies, and state-level victim advocates. See Appendix B for the topics discussed in these interviews.

In the second phase of site visits, we met with three direct service providers in each state, all funded by VOCA assistance grants. We conducted focus groups with clients of five of these programs, one in each of five states. These programs included a prosecutor-based program for victims of all types of crime; a private non-profit serving sexual assault victims; a private non-profit serving homicide survivors; a private non-profit serving domestic violence victims; and a private non-profit serving Native American domestic violence and sexual assault victims. See Appendices C and D for the topics discussed in these site visit interviews and focus groups.

After the state and local program profiles, we present our general conclusions and recommendations from the site visits. The specific areas we analyzed are then presented individually.

State Program Profiles

California VOCA Assistance Program Profile 2001	
Administrative Agency	Victim/Witness Assistance Program, Governor's Office of Criminal Justice Planning
Co-Location with Compensation and Other Victim Assistance Programs	Compensation is administered in a separate state agency. The Office also administers Byrne, FVPSA, STOP VAWA, and Children's Justice Act funds. PHS funds are administered by a separate state agency.
<i>Funding</i>	
State Funding for Victim Assistance	\$20,707,000
2002 VOCA Grant	\$42,709,000
Number of Subgrants Awarded	300
<i>Performance Indicators</i>	
Number of Victims Served	283,030
Percent of Victims by Type of Crime	Domestic Violence: 58% Adult Sexual Assault: 10% Child Physical and Sexual Abuse: 9% Assault: 5% Homicide: 4% DUI/DWI Crashes: 6% Robbery: 2% Other: 6%
Percent of Victims Who Received Various Types of Services⁷²	Crisis Counseling: 53% Followup: 71% Therapy: 7% Group Treatment/Support: 9% Shelter/Safehouse: 7% Information/Referral (in-person): 88% Criminal Justice Support/Advocacy: 80% Emergency Financial Assistance: 19% Emergency Legal Advocacy: 28% Assistance in filing Compensation Claims: 56% Personal Advocacy: 14% Telephone contact Informational/Referral: 86% Other: 18%

⁷² Percentages total more than 100 because many victims receive multiple types of services.

Idaho VOCA Assistance Program Profile 2001	
Administrative Agency	Idaho Council on Domestic Violence and Victim Assistance
Co-Location with Compensation and Other Victim Assistance Programs	Compensation is administered in a separate state agency. The Council also administers FVPSA funds. PHHS funds and Children's Justice Act funds are administered by the same state agency, and STOP VAWA and Byrne are administered by a second state agency.
<i>Funding</i>	
State Funding for Victim Assistance	\$500,090
2002 VOCA Grant	\$2,112,000
Number of Subgrants Awarded	24
<i>Performance Indicators</i>	
Number of Victims Served	8,856
Percent of Victims by Type of Crime	Domestic Violence: 50% Adult Sexual Assault: 4% Child Physical and Sexual Abuse: 15% Assault: 3% Homicide: 0% DUI/DWI Crashes: 2% Robbery: 4% Other: 21%
Percent of Victims Who Received Various Types of Services⁷³	Crisis Counseling: 50% Followup: 62% Therapy: 29% Group Treatment/Support: 33% Shelter/Safehouse: 9% Information/Referral (in-person): 59% Criminal Justice Support/Advocacy: 53% Emergency Financial Assistance: 5% Emergency Legal Advocacy: 10% Assistance in filing Compensation Claims: 5% Personal Advocacy: 68% Telephone contact Informational/Referral: 59% Other: 15%

⁷³ Percentages total more than 100 because many victims receive multiple types of services.

Pennsylvania VOCA Assistance Program Profile 2001	
Administrative Agency	Assistance Division, Bureau of Victim Services, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency
Co-Location with Compensation and Other Victim Assistance Programs	Compensation is administered in a sister division within the Bureau. The Assistance Division also administers Byrne, State and Local, and STOP VAWA funds. FVPSA and PHS funds are administered by two separate state agencies.
<i>Funding</i>	
State Funding for Victim Assistance	\$64,913,947
2002 VOCA Grant	\$15,804,000
Number of Subgrants Awarded	128
<i>Performance Indicators</i>	
Number of Victims Served	131,276
Percent of Victims by Type of Crime	Domestic Violence: 51% Adult Sexual Assault: 7% Child Physical and Sexual Abuse: 9% Assault: 9% Homicide: 3% DUI/DWI Crashes: 4% Robbery: 4% Other: 13%
Percent of Victims Who Received Various Types of Services⁷⁴	Crisis Counseling: 48% Followup: 34% Therapy: 1% Group Treatment/Support: 9% Shelter/Safehouse: 5% Information/Referral (in-person): 32% Criminal Justice Support/Advocacy: 36% Emergency Financial Assistance: 3% Emergency Legal Advocacy: 18% Assistance in filing Compensation Claims: 9% Personal Advocacy: 4% Telephone contact Informational/Referral: 6% Other: 16%

⁷⁴ Percentages total more than 100 because many victims receive multiple types of services.

South Carolina VOCA Assistance Program Profile 2002	
Administrative Agency	Victims of Crime Grant Program, Office of Justice Programs, Department of Public Safety
Co-Location with Compensation and Other Victim Assistance Programs	Compensation is administered in a separate state agency. Byrne, State and Local, and STOP VAWA funds are also administered by the Dept. of Public Safety. FVPSA, and the Children's Justice Act funds are administered by the same state agency, PHHS funds are administered by a separate state agency.
<i>Funding</i>	
State Funding for Victim Assistance	\$3,800,000
2002 VOCA Grant	\$5,500,000
Number of Subgrants Awarded	110
<i>Performance Indicators</i>	
Number of Victims Served	64,924
Percent of Victims by Type of Crime	Domestic Violence: 26% Adult Sexual Assault: 2% Child Physical and Sexual Abuse: 5% Assault: 2% Homicide: 0% DUI/DWI Crashes: 0% Robbery: 0% Other: 64%
Percent of Victims Who Received Various Types of Services⁷⁵	Crisis Counseling: 19% Followup: 28% Therapy: 10% Group Treatment/Support: 12% Shelter/Safehouse: 8% Information/Referral (in-person): 76% Criminal Justice Support/Advocacy: 9% Emergency Financial Assistance: 2% Emergency Legal Advocacy: 5% Assistance in filing Compensation Claims: 3% Personal Advocacy: 20% Telephone contact Informational/Referral: 32% Other: 61%

⁷⁵ Percentages total more than 100 because many victims receive multiple types of services.

Vermont VOCA Assistance Program Profile 2002	
Administrative Agency	Center for Crime Victims Services
Co-Location with Compensation and Other Victim Assistance Programs	Compensation is also administered by the Center. The Center also administers FVPSA, State and Local, and STOP VAWA funds. Byrne and PHHS funds are administered by two separate state agencies. The Children's Justice Act funds are administered by the Center for Prevention and Treatment of Sexual Abuse.
<i>Funding</i>	
State Funding for Victim Assistance	\$1,574,774
2002 VOCA Grant	\$1,259,000
Number of Subgrants Awarded	26
<i>Performance Indicators</i>	
Number of Victims Served	10,101
Percent of Victims by Type of Crime	Domestic Violence: 69% Adult Sexual Assault: 9% Child Physical and Sexual Abuse: 9% Assault: 5% Homicide: 3% DUI/DWI Crashes: 2% Robbery: 1% Other: 3%
Percent of Victims Who Received Various Types of Services⁷⁶	Crisis Counseling: 17% Followup: 75% Therapy: 1% Group Treatment/Support: 7% Shelter/Safehouse: 4% Information/Referral (in-person): 18% Criminal Justice Support/Advocacy: 56% Emergency Financial Assistance: 2% Emergency Legal Advocacy: 18% Assistance in filing Compensation Claims: 1% Personal Advocacy: 50% Telephone contact Informational/Referral: 23% Other: 16%

⁷⁶ Percentages total more than 100 because many victims receive multiple types of services.

Wisconsin VOCA Assistance Program Profile 2002	
Administrative Agency	Office of Crime Victim Services, Department of Justice
Co-Location with Compensation and Other Victim Assistance Programs	Compensation is also administered by the Office. The Office also administers State and Local funds. The Office of Justice Assistance administers Byrne and STOP VAWA funds. FVPSA and PHHS funds are administered by two separate agencies. The Children's Justice Act funds are administered by the DOJ.
<i>Funding</i>	
State Funding for Victim Assistance	\$15,214,000
2002 VOCA Grant	\$7,184,000
Number of Subgrants Awarded	74
<i>Performance Indicators</i>	
Number of Victims Served	37,137
Percent of Victims by Type of Crime	Domestic Violence: 42% Adult Sexual Assault: 7% Child Physical and Sexual Abuse: 16% Assault: 5% Homicide: 5% DUI/DWI Crashes: 1% Robbery: 4% Other: 21%
Percent of Victims Who Received Various Types of Services⁷⁷	Crisis Counseling: 29% Followup: 36% Therapy: 66% Group Treatment/Support: 5% Shelter/Safehouse: 1% Information/Referral (in-person): 46% Criminal Justice Support/Advocacy: 35% Emergency Financial Assistance: 1% Emergency Legal Advocacy: 11% Assistance in filing Compensation Claims: 12% Personal Advocacy: 20% Telephone contact Informational/Referral: 116%⁷⁸ Other: 0%

⁷⁷ Percentages total more than 100 because many victims receive multiple types of services.

⁷⁸ Statistic as reported in Wisconsin's 2002 Subgrant Award Report to OVC.

Direct Service Program Profiles

Community Service Programs (CSP), Inc. Victim-Witness Assistance Program Hate Crime/Gang Program Orange, California	
Administration	Private non-profit
Objective(s)	Provide needed services for victims and witnesses and encourage their cooperation in the investigation of the case and prosecution of the offender, through a contract with the prosecutor's office.
Services	Crisis counseling, emergency assistance, hotline, crisis response teams, direct assistance, support counseling information, advocacy with the criminal justice system, employer intervention, creditor intervention, childcare, death notification, funeral arrangements, crime prevention information, witness protection, transportation, assistance in obtaining restraining orders, referral services, and cultural sensitivity/translation services.
Victims Served	Victims of all crimes
Staff	102, plus many volunteers (70% are bilingual)
VOCA Funding	Five grants totaling \$1,415,623
History	CSP: incorporated in 1974 Victim-Witness Program: began 1980

Indian Health Council Peace Between Partners (program for victims of domestic violence) Sexual Assault Program Pauma Valley, California	
Administration	Private non-profit
Objective(s)	Building a wellness village in which the mental, physical, and social well being of the Indian community are served.
Services	One-on-one counseling Emergency shelter Legal advocacy Talking circles (culturally responsive group counseling) Referrals to outside agencies Relocation assistance
Victims Served	Victims of domestic violence and sexual assault; anyone registered at the clinic, non-Indian spouses, and children (Native Americans living on the reservations of the nine tribes in the consortium)
Staff	One counselor for each program
VOCA Funding	\$150,000 to the domestic violence program \$150,000 to the sexual assault program
History	Indian Health Council began in 1982 Domestic violence program began in 1996 Sexual assault program began in 1998

Su Casa Family Crisis and Support Center Crisis shelter Outreach center Transitional housing Teen outreach program Thrift store Artesia, California	
Administration	Private non-profit
Objective(s)	Reduce the effects of domestic violence and child abuse on victims through information and support services. Break the intergenerational cycle of violence through community outreach and prevention education.
Services	Provides victims with shelter and support services, assistance with temporary restraining orders, individual and group counseling, support groups, and court accompaniment. Shelter provides an on-site school for children, parent education classes and support groups, and advocacy with legal, medical, and social services.
Victims served	Women and children who are victims of domestic violence
Staff	Seven staff members: three counselors, one legal advocate, two childcare coordinators, one manager (five fluent in Spanish), plus volunteers
VOCA Funding	\$64,228 from VOCA grants
History	1976: started by a victim 1979: crisis shelter formed 1980: The Center was incorporated

Kootenai County Court's Community Justice Program Kootenai County Victim Impact Project Kootenai County, Idaho	
Administration	Court-based
Objective(s)	Help victims understand the juvenile court process and understand their rights and receive restitution.
Services	Arranging victim/offender mediations Court escort Help in completing victim impact statements Notification of the status and outcome of the case
Victims Served	Adult victims of juvenile property crimes
Staff	One director, one staff plus volunteers
VOCA Funding	\$18,000 grant in 2000
History	Began 1998

Terry Reilly Health Services SANE Solutions Boise and Canyon County (Nampa), Idaho	
Administration	Private non-profit
Services	Courtroom advocacy and support Personal safety courses Group and individual counseling
Victims Served	Child victims of sexual abuse, their families, and adults who experienced child sexual abuse.
Staff	Four to five counselors plus volunteers for office tasks
VOCA Funding	\$80,000 in 2000
History	Began 1985

Women's and Children's Alliance Crisis Center Program Boise, Idaho	
Administration	Private non-profit
Services	Crisis and long-term counseling Shelter Help with transitional housing Case management Advocacy with the criminal justice system Help in applying for restraining orders Individual and group counseling Parenting classes Rap group (peer support group) Life skills training Choices classes Drug and alcohol classes Legal aid to help women with custody and divorce issues
Victims served	Domestic violence and sexual assault victims
Staff	23-25 full time staff
VOCA Funding	\$200,000 grant in 2000
History	Began in 1930s under YWCA Broke away 1996, renamed WCA Crisis Center Program started in 1980

Anti-Violence Partnership Families of Murder Victims (FMV) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	
Administration	Private non-profit
Objective(s)	Helping families and friends who have lost a loved one to murder
Services	Providing criminal justice support/advocacy Emotional support Individual and group counseling Therapy Support groups Follow-up contact Court accompaniment Information and referral Assistance with compensation claims and victim impact statements Community outreach and education
Victims Served	Families and friends of homicide victims
Staff	Seven full time, plus interns and volunteers
VOCA funding	\$159,282 in 2000
History	FMV began in 1980

Chester County Comprehensive Victim Center West Chester, Pennsylvania	
Administration	Private non-profit
Objective(s)	Reduce the effects of crimes on victims, witnesses, and family members, reduce victimization, and sensitize professionals to victims' needs. Educate the public to reduce the incidence of crime and improve cooperation with the CJ system.
Services	Hotline Advocacy/information Counseling Translation for hearing-impaired victims Victims rights services (through a contract with the prosecutor's office) Service referrals Court and hospital accompaniment Assistance with compensation, victim impact statements Peer support groups
Victims served	Victims of all types of crimes
Staff	19 full time, six part time, 23 volunteers, 13 board members
VOCA Funding	\$214,312 for fiscal year 2000-2001
History	Started in 1973 as a sexual assault center. Began serving all victims of crime in 1976.

Senior Victim Services Medio, Pennsylvania	
Administration	Private non-profit
Objective(s)	Assists victims of crime ages 55 and over to regain control over their lives, and pursues ways in which to empower older victims within the criminal justice system.
Services	Case management Phone counseling Home visits Medical/court accompaniment Court advocacy, including assistance with restitution and victim impact statements Information and referrals Other system advocacy Help with compensation claims Victim's rights services Training of other professionals in the community Emergency services Follow-up contact
Victims Served	Crime victims 55 years of age or older in Delaware County, Pennsylvania.
Staff	Three full-time, one part-time, plus volunteers
VOCA funding	\$111,257 in 2001
History	SVS began in 1977

Mothers Against Drunk Driving Columbia, South Carolina (state-wide chapter of national organization)	
Administration	Private non-profit
Objective(s)	To stop the crime of drunk driving, to support victims, and to prevent underage drinking.
Services	Emotional/grief support Criminal justice advocacy/information Therapeutic weekend Annual remembrance vigil
Victims Served	Victims of drunk driving incidents
Staff	One paid advocate for victim services, 20 volunteers (other employees involved in functions other than victim services)
VOCA funding	\$44,023 in 2001

Newberry County Sheriff's Office Victim Assistance Program Newberry, South Carolina	
Administration	Law enforcement-based
Objective(s)	Provide for the total needs of victims as well as provide the community with education and awareness in the areas of crime prevention, personal safety, and community involvement.
Services	Crisis intervention Emotional support Information on the criminal justice system Preparation for court appearance Support while attending court Referral to community resources Assistance in seeking restitution Assistance in filing for victim's compensation
Victims Served	Victims of all crimes in Newberry County
Staff	Two full-time (one paid by VOCA), 16 volunteers
VOCA funding	\$28,323
History	Began in 1999

Rape Crisis Council of Pickens County Pickens County, South Carolina	
Administration	Private non-profit
Services	24-hour crisis line Hospital and police accompaniment and support Court preparation Referrals for counseling services Self-defense classes Public education and awareness Camp for abused children
Victims Served	Adult, adolescent, and child victims of sexual and physical assault, and adult survivors of child sexual assault
Staff	Program director, three counselors, and volunteers who participate in all activities except hospital accompaniment
VOCA funding	\$98,300
History	Founded in 1985

St. Albans Abuse and Rape Crisis Center Franklin and Grand Isle Counties, Vermont	
Administration	Private non-profit
Objective(s)	Provide domestic violence and sexual assault victims with the support they need, and to end violence against women by educating the community and the criminal justice system, and changing legislative policy.
Services	24-hour hotline Hospital emergency room support Assists with completing Relief from Abuse Orders Assists with safety plans Counseling Provides information on the court system Referrals to other counselors Legal advocates Provides temporary emergency housing Runs play groups and support groups for children Conducts public education Provides prevention activities for schools and community groups Outreach to many community services and justice agencies
Victims Served	Victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. Special emphasis on disabled victims.
Staff	Six paid staff positions, two full time AmeriCorps VISTA members, 30 part time volunteers.
VOCA Funding	\$16,095 for FY 2000
History	Program began in 1979

Windsor County State's Attorney's Office Victim Advocate Program Windsor County, Vermont	
Administration	Prosecutor-based
Objective(s)	Assists crime victims in Windsor County who have criminal cases.
Services	Provide information regarding the crime and court process Help prepare a victim impact statement Provide short term support and counseling Referral to other programs for long term support Help with victim compensation applications
Victims Served	Any crime victim once the case has reached the prosecutor
Staff	One victim advocate
VOCA funding	\$350,000 provided for all State's Attorney's Offices across the state
History	Began in 1986, mandated by state legislation

Women Helping Battered Women Chittenden, Vermont	
Administration	Private non-profit
Objective(s)	To support and empower women and children by providing services and working for social change.
Services	Support groups for women and children Educational workshops for the community 24-hour hotline Shelter Advocacy program to assist victims with subsistence needs (legal advocacy, income, food, clothing, housing, medical care, transportation, employment, and training).
Victims Served	Battered women and their children in Chittenden County
Staff	12 full-time staff plus volunteers
VOCA funding	\$25,975
History	Began in 1974

The Counseling Center of Milwaukee, Inc. Hand-in-Hand Program Milwaukee, Wisconsin	
Administration	Private non-profit
Objective(s)	Provides mental health services with a particular focus on youth.
Services	In-home counseling services, including individual and family counseling Case management Support groups Transportation, childcare and snacks Female and male teen and children survivors groups, and an after-care support group
Victims Served	Youthful victims of sexual abuse or survival sex
VOCA funding	\$143,000
History	Began in 1988; grew out of an earlier program called Safe Path.

Pathways of Courage Kenosha County, Wisconsin	
Administration	Private non-profit
Objective(s)	To provide services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.
Services	Counseling 24-hour hotline and advocates on call Advocate at the courthouse Refer children to other services Support groups for teenage girls and battered women Train medical personnel to screen for domestic and sexual assault.
Victims Served	Men and women who were sexually abused as children, in same sex domestic violence relationships, teenagers affected by abuse, and batterers who are looking for help.
Staff	Nine full time, six part time, 50 volunteers
VOCA funding	\$237,875 in 2000
History	Result of a 2001 merger between two previous programs, the Domestic Violence Project and Kenoshans Against Sexual Assault

The Racine District Attorney's Office Victim Assistance Program Racine, Wisconsin	
Administration	Prosecution-based
Objective(s)	To reach victims within 72 hours of the crime to help them through the court process and with other victim services.
Services	Referrals to other agencies Inform victims about the bail process and court process Attend court with the victims Notify victims on the status of the release of the offenders Help complete VOCA compensation forms Notify victims of their rights
Victims Served	Victims of felony level violent crimes
Staff	Full-time staff but no volunteers
VOCA funding	\$65,000
History	Began in 1999

Conclusions and Recommendations

Our discussions with VOCA assistance program administrators and staff, members of oversight bodies, victim advocacy groups, and direct service providers, and focus groups with victims, while not obtaining complete consensus, highlighted a number of important trends and challenges for the future.

A number of themes relevant to the state-level administration of VOCA funds emerged:

- *Congressional caps on allocations of VOCA funds to the states have limited the level of resources available to victim service programs, and allocation formulas*

are likely to continue to impose restrictions on victim assistance program resources. It is particularly important to manage funding programs to best effect when resources are likely to become more scarce, or at least see little growth, in the near future.

- *Long-range strategic planning can help state administrators target goals for the victim service system and set intermediate steps and objectives.* Most administrators' funding strategies center around providing continuation funding to current service programs to continue providing current services. While this reflects the original purpose of VOCA legislation, and it is important to maintain the stability of core services, it may be difficult to expand into new areas if most or all of the funds are committed to continuation awards. It is admittedly quite difficult to do detailed planning for the future when the level of resources available in the future is uncertain and subject to annual political appropriations processes (or fluctuations in allocations, as occurred prior to the era of caps).
- *Victims' needs assessments are necessary for planning future priorities and developments.* Most states use informal processes to identify gaps in services and underserved populations or areas of the state, drawing on the expertise of those working in the field. This method has advantages, but can fail to consider the needs of overlooked populations or areas.
- *There is consensus that many types of victims (defined by both type of crime and victim demographics) are underserved, and certain types of services are not as available as need would demand.* Efforts to meet these needs may involve expanding current victim service programs, including developing new programs as well as new staffing patterns or training to respond appropriately to new victim populations. Another approach is to develop victim service programs within other types of organizations that currently work with underserved populations.
- *It may be difficult for new programs that have never received a VOCA grant to get funded, because they may not be on RFP mailing lists and they may not be able to write effective proposals.* Some state administrators do not feel it is appropriate to provide technical assistance for grantwriting, although quite a few others do provide extensive assistance.
- *It is important for VOCA assistance and compensation administrators to collaborate with each other and with administrators of other federal and state funding sources, to effectively leverage the total pool of funds to avoid duplication and fill gaps.* However, there is no one best approach to collaboration. Some staff feel that centralizing all funding sources in one office is the most effective way to ensure coordination, while others fear the possible effects of this concentration of power and call instead for a strong multidisciplinary coordination mechanism at the state level.
- *States use various procedures for making the subgrant award decisions, and each procedure has its advantages and drawbacks.* Some states concentrate the decision-making power in the administrative agency, others use a state-level multidisciplinary board, and others use a decentralized system with decision-making power effectively evolved to local-level bodies across the state. Each is

subject to at least perceived political pressures. Service providers that belong to a strong network, such as domestic violence coalitions, are often thought to have the advantage in obtaining funding because of the strength and the connections of the coalition.

- *As with needs assessment procedures, monitoring processes are largely informal and constrained to review of progress reports (unless problems are noted, then more active monitoring such as site visits may occur).* Monitoring is very important to ensure that funds are put to best use, particularly in an atmosphere of largely continuation funding. Some states are stepping up monitoring procedures and many providers welcome these efforts.
- *Few proactive efforts by state administrators to monitor and enforce providers' compliance with requirements to assist victims with compensation were observed.* As monitoring efforts are enhanced, this would be an important area to include.
- *State VOCA assistance administrators have recently formed a professional association, the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators.* This may be a very useful vehicle for exchanging information among state agencies on all these important activities – strategic planning; needs assessments; identifying and developing responses to service gaps, including cultivating new programs; coordination of funding streams; and monitoring subrecipients – so that states can learn from each other's experiences and innovative ideas.
- *Many state administrators may need additional administrative funding allocations to support these critical activities.* Programs function better and produce better results when they are well-managed, and good management requires time and attention. State administrators are allowed to use up to five percent of VOCA allocations for administrative activities, at their discretion. Many administrators are using this allowance and are still not able to accomplish a number of necessary and important administrative functions. An increase in the allowance percentage could help many states administer these funds more efficiently and effectively. In addition, a minimum administrative allocation could be established to ensure that even the smallest states have enough funds to support the necessary administrative activities. This change would not take away from funds available to direct service providers if it were accompanied by higher allocation caps allowing an increase in CVF funds available to the states.

Other issues directly pertinent to VOCA-funded community service programs arose:

- *Some programs rely heavily on volunteers and have no trouble meeting the federal requirement for use of volunteers, but for other programs this is problematic.* Some providers have difficulties using volunteers because their services require extensive professional training; because volunteers may work part-time, sporadically, short-term, or not be available when they're most needed; or because of privacy/confidentiality concerns (particularly in rural or tribal areas). Victims can be effective as volunteers or staff, but it's important that their own victimization issues have been resolved.

- *Programs face continual staffing challenges resulting from stressful working conditions and low pay.* Disparities in pay between different sectors of the victim service community can cause friction. It is possible to prevent burnout and turnover by special efforts to recognize staff efforts and improve their quality of life. There's a need for more bilingual, multicultural staff to better reflect the diversity of victims.
- *Coordination of agencies that serve victims, among public-based and private non-profit victim service providers as well as across professional boundaries to include others who contact victims (such as justice agency personnel, healthcare providers, education personnel, social service providers, and so on) is critical.* Each type of provider has an important role to fulfill and can work most effectively and efficiently in a coordinated network. Methods of coordination can include cross-training, serving on multidisciplinary task forces, and developing coordinate policies or procedures implemented through memoranda of understanding. However, issues around conflicting program mission and confidentiality of victim information may present challenges to coordination efforts.
- *Direct service programs need more support for essential administrative activities, such as fundraising, community coordination activities, and meeting reporting requirements.* Allowing a percentage of VOCA funds to be used for these purposes would be very helpful to many programs. Some programs would also like to expand the purposes for which VOCA funds can be used in other ways, such as for prevention and education activities.
- *Victims' rights may be codified in legislation but implementation is often less than perfect.* More training and resources to assist justice agency personnel in their efforts to provide victims' rights as specified by law are necessary, as are corrective mechanisms for cases in which victims are not provided their rights.
- *Duplicative or inconsistent reporting requirements imposed by various federal agencies that administer different victim service funding streams impose a burden on providers.* Coordination of these requirements would be extremely helpful to service programs and decrease the amount of time needed for administrative record-keeping (which is not supported by VOCA funds).
- *Direct service providers are not always well-informed about compensation and may not provide the most effective assistance to their clients.* Efforts should be made to develop providers' ability to assist with compensation, including increased training and resources from the state compensation program to make sure that providers are well acquainted with current compensation policies and procedures. This is particularly important since policies and practices have been changing substantially in recent years in many states. It might also be useful for providers to have a protocol for assessing whether a client might need and qualify for compensation, and how to help clients through the application process.

Management of the State Grant Program

The state VOCA office receives and administers the federal VOCA grant by awarding subgrants to direct service providers throughout the state. They are also authorized to use up to

five percent of VOCA funds for administrative purposes such as personnel costs, strategic planning, needs assessments, monitoring/evaluations, coordination with other agencies, and training and technical assistance for direct service providers.

Historically VOCA administrators have faced the challenge of fluctuations in funding levels from year to year, depending on the amount of CVF collections each year.⁷⁹ The dramatic increase in CVF funding levels in the mid-1990s prompted OVC to hold a series of regional meetings for state VOCA assistance administrators in 1997. These discussions highlighted the importance of long-range planning to ensure that states could continue to fund core victim services even in lean years and to encourage expansion of types of services and outreach to underserved victim populations when extra funding was available. OVC and the VOCA administrators found that the planning process is complex and ideally includes an accurate measurement of the needs of crime victims in the state, through state surveys or other needs assessment instruments. Once states identify the underserved and gaps in service, they must develop a plan to reach out to them and develop new programs when necessary. This means that state administrators must publicize the availability of VOCA funding, particularly to organizations that serve underserved populations. As VOCA is only one of many possible federal and state resources for crime victims, VOCA administrators must be knowledgeable of other funding streams and work to coordinate and maximize the use of these monies. And finally, the meetings reaffirmed the need for victim input into state VOCA advisory boards, the need for statewide training on victim issues, better implementation of victims' rights legislation, and increased use of technology to serve crime victims (OVC, 1997).

The concerns raised at the regional meetings formed the basis for some changes in the OVC guidelines for state VOCA administrators, and further thinking resulted in recommendations from the field reported in OVC's *New Directions* (1998). Federal policymakers responded to funding fluctuation issues by allowing states to use a four-year obligation period for VOCA funds, which allows each state to “smooth” fluctuations by planning disbursements to subrecipients over an extended timeframe. This change was effected in OVC’s 1997 guidelines for state assistance administrators.

Since federal FY 2000, Congress has controlled instability in federal funding levels by imposing caps on allocations from the CVF. These caps have produced excess funds – collected into the Fund but not allocated -- of **over \$638 million**, after expected FY 2003 allocations are made. While the VOCA assistance allocation for 2002 was nearly as high as it has ever been, several trends foreshadow a potential drop in assistance allocations to states beginning with the FY 2003 allocations.

⁷⁹ CVF funds come not from appropriations but from collections of fines and penalties imposed on convicted federal offenders. Very large fines against corporate offenders have resulted in dramatic increases in CVF collections in some years, with other years falling to more “normal” levels

First, Congress has not shown an inclination to make more than fairly modest increases in the annual cap over the several years caps have been imposed, despite the growth of the unallocated excess, perhaps due to the softening of the economy since early/mid 2001 and more restrictive spending caps imposed on federal agencies. In addition, Congress has changed the allocation formula to provide more funds for earmarks and set-asides such as the federal victim notification system, victim/witness staff in FBI field offices and U.S. Attorneys' Offices, and an increased allowance to OVC for discretionary awards. Finally, the payout formula for state compensation programs has been increased by half, from 40 percent of state expenditures to 60 percent in FY 2003. While victim assistance has received approximately 80 percent of CVF allocations in recent years, and is likely to continue receiving the lion's share for at least the next several years, the actual dollar amount available to direct service providers may drop in coming years. In fact, as of this writing the proposed cap on FY 2003 allocations would produce a **seven percent decrease** in funds allocated to state VOCA assistance programs in FY 2003, relative to 2002 allocations.

With funding levels subject to uncertainty, we looked for indications that VOCA managers in the site visit states had effectively institutionalized strategic planning, formal needs assessments, targeted outreach to the underserved, coordination with other programs, training and technical assistance for subrecipients, and evaluation of services. We present an analysis of what we learned about these aspects of program management and reflect on which approaches best help VOCA subrecipients – the direct service programs – meet the ultimate goal of serving victims as efficiently and as comprehensively as possibly.

Strategic Planning and Needs Assessments

The central mission of the VOCA assistance program is to fund a comprehensive network of local providers to assist crime victims with their essential crime-related needs. Ideally, programs would be funded to assist all types of crime victims in all regions of the state with a variety of crime-related needs, from crisis counseling to shelter to personal/legal/financial advocacy to criminal justice system support and assistance in filing compensation claims. In OVC's *New Directions* (1998) states are encouraged to expand services, e.g., to develop services designed for diverse constituencies, to identify underserved victim populations and the need for new services, and to utilize a community-wide comprehensive multi-disciplinary response.

We found that state administrators are generally knowledgeable about and sympathetic to these recommendations. States understand the importance of identifying and addressing unmet needs and gaps in service. In the final analysis, however, most states have few or no resources to spend on well-developed needs assessments and outreach programs. As the VOCA assistance allocation is based on a state's population, the five percent administrative allowance is particularly limiting for smaller states. One such state estimated that a formal needs assessment to identify underserved populations would cost \$40,000, an amount far beyond its reach. Lack of financial resources is not, however, the only obstacle to formal strategic planning. We found that even the largest states lack strong long-range plan to broaden the reach of victim assistance

funding. They simply go along with the economics of the program, carrying over funds in flush years, and distributing less money to the same number of programs in lean years. One state administrator stated, “we are doing a great job now, meeting every requirement, and doing our best to help victims. Our strategic plan is to keep doing what we are doing.”

Only one site visit state had contracted with an outside researcher to conduct a formal needs assessment using focus groups, interviews, and questionnaires with victims, counselors, advocates, service providers, and county policy board members. The contractor produced findings and recommended three priority areas for future attention: (1) provide basic services to currently unserved victims, as defined by type of victimization (those other than domestic violence and sexual assault victims); (2) increase staff salaries and benefits; and (3) provide crisis intervention and early outreach to victims. These recommendations formed the basis for allocation of additional funds received in flush years, although the state administrators pointed out problems with the execution of the formal assessment.

However, most states use a more informal process to assess the needs of victims. Typical approaches included calling advocates in the field, site visits to programs, participation on advisory boards/task forces focused on victims, and consultation with domestic violence and sexual assault networks. Some states have found success holding public hearings across the state to get input. If the victim service community is small and tightly networked in the state, the administrator simply “knows what is needed.”

VOCA administrators often consult with their advisory boards/councils on needs and gaps in service. Every program has an advisory board composed of a multi-disciplinary group of professionals (e.g., law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, advocates, mental health counselors, and so forth). To their credit, two of the states have a victim on their board. The role of the boards varies. Some play an active role in deciding how funds would be spent but most serve *only* in an advisory capacity with the program administrators making the funding decisions. But in all cases the Boards presented one opportunity for administrators to learn about the needs of victims in the state.

Although most administrators interviewed expressed a wish to develop a systematic needs assessment process and better means of identifying gaps in service, they *all* were able to discuss what they *believed* to be serious needs. When asked, “What victims are underserved?” they had many ideas, including:

- Victims of crimes other than domestic violence and sexual assault, including property crime
- Rural victims
- Disabled victims
- Victims from certain racial/ethnic groups, such as Hispanics, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Hmong, Central Americans, Bosnians, and Native Americans

- “Marginalized” victims, such as migrant farm workers, lesbians and gays, and non-English speakers
- Teen victims
- Child abuse victims (in one state it was reported by an assistance administrator that there is a six-month waiting list to obtain counseling for child abuse victims)
- Victims of workplace violence
- Victims without phones

The VOCA administrators also had thoughts about gaps in types of services available. For example, they identified the need for:

- Mental health services
- Affordable child care, housing, legal services, health care, and dental care
- Services for children who witness domestic violence
- Transitional housing for women who leave shelter care
- Transportation services

The bottom line is that we observed a largely *ad hoc* needs assessment process in our site visit states. Everyone had an opinion about who was underserved and where the gaps in service were most glaring. Administrators and advocates frequently talked about the “victim du jour” and how victim issues are cyclical. First the focus was on child abuse, then rape, and then domestic violence when the O.J. Simpson trial was at its height. Now some believed it was time to go back to child abuse and do more on elder abuse. It was evident that more thoughtful planning would be useful. But based on the limited experience of one state, it is not evident that a formal needs assessment would provide the answers. Structured surveys of existing victim service programs (e.g., agency staffing, use of volunteers, wage scale for various types of staff, caseloads, types of services provided for each type of victim, use of volunteers, training of direct service staff, etc.) might be useful in developing funding strategies, and have been used in some states.

Moreover, we did not find consensus on how to close the gaps in services. For example, special outreach to underserved classes of victims such as Hispanics, African-Americans, refugees, or disabled victims might encourage them to seek assistance from existing programs. In order for the existing shelters, crisis centers, hotlines, and advocacy programs to effectively serve them, staff would need special training in foreign languages, cultural sensitivity, and other special needs. Moreover, in many states the majority of advocates in rape crisis centers and domestic violence shelters are white women. Administrators felt that Blacks and Hispanics do not utilize these services but might if more Blacks and Hispanics were employed by these agencies. Some administrators thought to address these issues by having separate programs for special groups, such as adding victim services to the array of services already provided by minority service organizations.

Without a clear understanding and consensus on victim needs, priorities, and most effective service routes, it is very difficult to develop a multi-year strategic plan for growing services to better meet victims' needs. More often than not, VOCA administrators fund the same programs year after year. During lean years, program administrators generally said they simply cut the size of the awards to all the programs rather than cutting some programs altogether. In flush years they gave more funds to the same programs. Expansive outreach and special RFPs for innovative, specialized purposes were the exception, rather than the general practice.

Program Placement and Coordination

As was true for the compensation programs, the victim assistance programs operate within different government settings. Over the years, several of the victim assistance programs have been moved from one governmental entity to another as a result of political changes (e.g., a new governor took office and moved the program's auspices), legislative changes, or to co-locate programs that serve victims' interests. Administrators anticipated that future changes might also follow political changes and shifting priorities. As shown in the state program profiles, our site visit states are located in a variety of state agencies, including criminal justice agencies, human service agencies, independent agencies, and the governor's office. All were located in agencies that had some other victim service responsibilities, such as enforcing victim rights, training victim advocates, administering other federal and state grants, advising the governor on crime prevention, and so on.

We found that program placement *per se* was not a major factor in the management of the VOCA funds. For example, while VOCA administrators within larger criminal justice departments might be expected to have a philosophical mission to integrate victim concerns into all traditional criminal justice agencies (i.e., law enforcement, prosecution, and the judiciary), they did not necessarily award a larger percentage of grants to criminal justice agencies than did other states. Many of the administrators had been direct service providers prior to their jobs in the state bureaucracy. Their experiences serving crime victims was a critical factor in how they viewed their administrative job. The strength of different crime victim interests groups in the state is also an influential factor in how funds got allocated.

Two additional elements of program placement were very significant. Three of our VOCA assistance administrators are located within the same agency that administers the victim compensation program. As expected, when the compensation and assistance programs are co-located, greater coordination tends to exist between them than when they were located under different auspices. Coordination included cross training, sharing advisory boards, or holding joint staff meetings.

The second significant element of program location was co-location with other state and federal victim grants programs. Coordination of the funding process is very important since VOCA is one of a number of funding sources for service providers. Theoretically, coordination

would help avoid duplication of funding efforts as well as ensure that the distribution of the total pot of funds is maximized (by leveraging different funding sources, for example). In a couple of our states, the VOCA administrator was also responsible for STOP VAWA grants. Subrecipients and administrators found this combination of functions to be helpful. First, it saves administrative resources; it is cost efficient to have oversight and supervision of grants in one office. Second, a conscientious administrator who is cognizant of all available resources can assist programs in receiving the most coverage. One of the administrators we visited went beyond the criminal justice resources available to her, to review HHS and HUD RFPs to assist needy programs. Finally, one administrator felt that it was easier to insulate coordinated grant management from the political process. "It's safer if all grants are administered together. Using a pack mentality, we are more resistant to inappropriate influence."

However, it is possible for a single agency to administer various funding streams and yet not closely coordinate funding decisions because these decisions are made in different ways. In one state, for example, VOCA subgrants are awarded through a decentralized process in which decisions are effectively made at the county level, while STOP VAWA funds are administered through a centralized decision-making body composed of advocates and other experts from around the state. Other agencies administer other federal funds in different ways, including a pass-through arrangement with a state advocacy coalition.

In states where different funding streams are administered by different staff using different processes, coordination can still occur through a strong coordinating mechanism at the state level. If coordination is not institutionalized at a fairly high level, it depends more on informal discussions and working relationships among staff. Some advocates remarked that distributing the different funds in different ways has resulted in duplication of coordinating committees/policy boards/and the like at the local level, and that people are getting "meetinged" to death. However, subrecipients noted that the use of different funding processes by different administrators has the advantage of avoiding concentrating all the funds, and therefore the power, in the hands of a single agency that may be subject to political pressures.

Administrative and Training Activities

Administrators repeatedly talked about their need for more funds to create/sustain infrastructures for a good program and for strategic planning. Managers would like a larger administrative allowance and more flexibility in how it is used. Larger states with larger allocations were able to use their five percent administrative allowance to great advantage. One used administrative funds to create service program standards, conduct a statewide needs assessment, and create a systems analyst position to work with automated databases. For most states, serious planning, technological advances, and training of the field was possible only because the state received a special grant from OVC, such as a discretionary grant to create a training academy or Victim Services 2000 money.

State administrators and service providers felt that it would be helpful if the service providers could use some of their VOCA funds for administrative activities as well. Some service providers mentioned that they would like to use VOCA funds for administrative support, outreach, and related activities, but these activities are disallowed by federal regulations. They would also like to increase their use of technology, do more public education, train prosecutors on victims' rights and enforcing the state victims' rights laws, and legislative advocacy including passing an enforceable constitutional amendment on victims' rights. Others felt that all VOCA money should be used for direct services for victims. This is obviously a difficult balance with a limited pot of money. Services to victims are the highest priority but often the quality of service is compromised by a lack of administrative support.

The Funding Distribution and Monitoring Process

In this section we discuss how the funding distribution and monitoring process might affect the types of victims served and the services offered. Findings are derived from interviews in both phases of site visits and reflect the opinions of the funders, oversight board members, and subrecipients. All of the programs visited in the second site visit had been funded with VOCA funds for at least two years and many for a number of years.

The majority of the programs received funding through an essentially non-competitive process, since providing continuation funding is clearly the norm. For those who had to compete, only a few complained the process was not fair. Of course we only spoke to funded programs. It is likely that programs that were not funded would have a different story to tell. One notable exception among the six states was a state that funded programs using a formula basis through county-based boards. Some programs in that state complained that the process was arbitrary and political, while others felt that having local personnel involved made decisions more responsive to local needs.

The Application Process

In all states the process is set in motion by the publication of a Request for Proposals (RFP) from eligible direct service providers. Notice of the availability of grant funds is posted on state VOCA websites and mailings are generally sent to service providers in the state. None of the service programs visited reported having any problems learning about the availability of VOCA funds via multiple sources, such as the Internet, through RFPs, through direct mailings, from other program recipients, and through state analogues of the Federal Register.

In small states administrators believe that most service providers know about the RFP because the victim service community is closely knit together. In larger states, however, it's not clear that all potential applicants are sent the RFP. One administrator said, "we send notices to every municipality, county administrator and nonprofit we are aware of," but admitted that there was no current comprehensive list of service providers in the state. A few state administrators were willing to be proactive and search out new programs. Others instructed their staff that it was "improper" to solicit proposals from new, small agencies. Clearly programs that have been

in existence for a long time and have contacts with the state administrator are in a better position to find out about funding opportunities. As one VOCA subgrantee explained:

“[The state] has extra VOCA money that was not spent and is looking for projects to spend it on. That wasn’t really announced anywhere. We just know that if we have a special project we should take it to the state administrator and see if it fits the state’s guidelines for capacity building. We also get tons of mail about funding possibilities. Memos about extra money go to agencies that already have grants. Agencies that don’t already have grants will have to make special efforts.”

In the same state the VOCA administrative staff described the process somewhat differently:

“If new money does come in we go through a community-based process, asking 90 or more groups to comment on what the gaps are and what new services are needed. If a large group says, for example, that we need more work on teen victims, then we issue a solicitation on this. If no one applies, we go out looking for groups to work on this.”

While we heard a lot of talk about outreach, our site visits did not turn up many examples of VOCA administrators searching for new groups to fund. All of the states were committed to sustaining established programs. As summed up by a state court administrator, “once you get a VOCA grant, you basically keep it.” Some states did this by making the funding application non-competitive while others funded programs for two to four years at a time and then required a competitive application. Even in those states, there was a solid commitment to provide continued support to viable programs. VOCA was originally conceived as a way to provide stable funding for core services, so this is in keeping with the legislative intent.

Thus, the RFP is not really used to encourage new applicants for VOCA funding. Rather than funding new programs, states were more likely to award substantial amounts of additional money to existing grantees to offer new types of services or expand into new geographical areas. On the other hand, some long-time subgrantees found that it was almost impossible to get their basic VOCA grant for core services raised, once the amount had been established. We heard that it was easier to get new funding for a “sexy outreach effort” than to increase the amount needed for staff salaries and basic services.

There were two different schools of thought among the administrators as to whether they should, and do, help programs apply for VOCA funding. A couple believed that it would not be fair to other applicants and largely refrained from this type of technical assistance. Most, however, saw it as their responsibility to provide this type of help and did not see any conflict of interest in doing so. Advocates who were interviewed during the site visits differed on their opinions of the difficulty of the application process for VOCA assistance funding and the help received from the state administrators (about half thought it was fairly easy but others found it difficult). We found extreme differences of opinion even when asking about the same state administrator. For example, we heard:

- A program director said she found the VOCA application process “intimidating” compared with other funds, such as United Way, that she had applied for. She believes that applying for federal funds such as VOCA discourages programs that are not savvy about grant applications or reporting requirements. She thinks VOCA staff should do more training to help programs write successful grants.
- A law enforcement-based victim advocate remarked that people in her department do not have the expertise to apply for VOCA assistance grants. Managing grants and the paperwork that goes with it is “too difficult for ordinary law enforcement departments” in her opinion.
- Compared to other funding applications, the VOCA assistance application is “quite long,” according to one program director. She noted that she has been applying for these funds so it is “no big deal now,” but thought new grantees would have much more difficulty.
- A program director said the process for applying for VOCA is “not cumbersome.” Whenever they have had questions, the staff at the state VOCA assistance program have been “great and very helpful.” She was especially impressed with the amount of technical assistance they provide.
- The application process is “not hard.” “We have a good relationship” with the state administrator.
- A program director reported that compared with their other funding sources, the VOCA state administrator is the “sharpest” funder they work with and the application package is “quite clear.”
- According to one state domestic violence and sexual assault coalition, the grants process has been streamlined in the last few years and most providers are familiar with the process. However, frequent staff turnover means that programs must continuously train new staff on proposal writing and few programs have a full time fundraiser. It would be helpful if the state administrator was more open about the selection process and gave feedback about why applications were turned down, so that new staff could learn from their experiences.
- “They bend over backwards to help, they do so much technical assistance. They would go to the funding staff of the applicant and tell them what to do to get continued funding.”
- “It’s extremely competitive. If you leave out one letter of support, you worry about being thrown out.”
- “They used to do a big annual seminar about how to write a grant and they gave you a completed grant to see. They haven’t done this in several years.”
- “If VOCA can’t fund something, they might tell you to send the same application to VAWA for a better chance. Might tell you how to change it to make it better.”
- “The process is arbitrary and political.”

Subgrant Awards

VOCA regulations give the state VOCA administrator great discretion in awarding subgrants to victim service providers, as long as the VOCA requirements for the four priority categories (ten percent of allocations to programs for each type of victim: domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and underserved) are met and as long as the subgrantees agree to the requirements for receiving federal funds (e.g., funding match, use of volunteers, referrals to compensation). Thus, state administrators can opt to fund a combination of private non-profit agencies or programs within criminal justice or other governmental agencies. State administrators can fund many small programs or a few large ones. They can focus on core services or search out new types of services. The only real limitation is that the funds must be used for direct services to victims, and cannot be used for activities such as prevention, perpetrator rehabilitation, prosecution, administrative activities, or planning/coordination efforts (although some of these requirements may change with pending 2003 guidelines). Almost every direct service program thought these restrictions should be loosened. Most unpopular were the prohibitions against using funds for administrative and preventive tasks. Consider these comments:

- “We will never send a grant out of this office with the word “prevention” in it, not even the word “education.” I understand where VOCA is coming from and agree that most of the money should go for direct service, but we feel we should be able to provide victims with some preventive services. We want to keep them from coming back next week.”
- “If we did enough prevention, we might not need the VOCA grant.”
- “We would like to use VOCA funds for crime prevention services, especially given the easy accessibility of elderly persons to criminals. Moreover, many crimes against elderly victims are premeditated (like fraud) and therefore early prevention efforts could be particularly effective at preventing such occurrences.”
- To document the services provided “we need a half-time administrator.” VOCA restrictions are “not realistic” for the demands of program administration.
- A program administrator said the majority of VOCA funds should stay with victim services, but “someone is needed to administer the program.” She would like additional money to help run the program.

One program expressed frustration that the state does not allow VOCA funds to purchase food at group functions for victims. They work with victims from a culture in which the provision of food is considered a common courtesy. A few program directors complained they could not use VOCA funds for batterer treatment. Listen to the argument articulated by a domestic violence program director:

“Funding needs to be more comprehensive. A system needs to be set up that preserves healing and focuses on social change. Services should be provided that address the problems for each individual so they can decide how to move on. Sometimes, the future will involve reunification. Other times it will not. In either case, services need to be

provided so that all the individuals involved are treated, can heal, and can participate in shaping a healthy future. By restricting funds only to victims, the offender remains untreated and can continue inappropriate behavior with the client or with other individuals. This perspective is not advocating for reunification in all cases. It is suggesting that everyone involved in the violence must be treated for the cycle to end.”

Whatever the perceptions about how VOCA funds *should* be used, the applicants seem to know the rules and don't risk their grant by including prohibited activities. Once the applications are in, the states make final awards according to their own state procedures. In some the administrator makes the decision with input from an advisory board. In others a governing council makes the decision based on recommendations of the administrator. In one state local boards make decisions for their county, with approval by the state administrative agency officials. Whatever the design of the decision-making process, we heard a range of opinion on its fairness. For example,

- The board's funding decisions are often “very arbitrary” and the process oftentimes political. One or two agencies that are well connected to the [decision-maker] seem to make out very well in funding decisions.
- “The process of annual funding decisions is very mysterious, and often leads to bad feelings both toward the policy board and among the programs competing for funds.”
- “I feel that the administrator is doing the best she can to fund the needed programs.”

Although the administrators spoke of a competitive bidding process, almost all of the funding gets awarded for continuation projects. New programs may have trouble competing because of the requirement that 25 to 50 percent (this varies by state) of their funding is from non-federal sources, and also the requirement to use volunteers. In small communities where everyone is related and privacy is a big concern, volunteers are not easy to use. This is a particular problem for rural and Native American programs applying for funding. Other programs, such as those providing professional therapeutic services, found the requirement to use volunteers difficult as well. Some states add on additional requirements that are difficult for new programs, such as operating a 24-hour hotline, providing services to all types of victims, and maintaining standard hours of operations.

Like the majority of programs nationwide, more than three-quarters of the programs funded in the site visit states are private non-profits. Several of our states considered criminal justice and other government victim services to be underfunded. These agencies generally receive state funds for victim services.

The site visit states awarded a lion's share of the VOCA money to programs serving victims of domestic violence. In this regard, the states were similar to VOCA programs nationwide. There is no doubt that the organization and infrastructure provided by the statewide networks positively impact the ability of the individual domestic violence agencies to secure funding. For

example, in one state, all domestic violence programs are part of the state network. The state office does no direct service; they do coordination, public policy, information gathering, training, fundraising, and outreach to the underserved (i.e., disabled; deaf; older women). Most importantly for VOCA, the network developed a funding formula for the programs that takes into account many elements including the population of the service area and types of services provided. Although the individual programs apply directly to the state VOCA office for funding, all of the VOCA and state victims' money is allocated based on this formula. Thus, the programs can count on their fair share of subgrants vis-à-vis other similar victim programs. On the other hand, the domestic violence programs are constantly looking for additional sources of funding; they are short of money even with their large share of VOCA. As discussed below in the section on service providers, the low staff pay for high stress jobs causes frequent turnover and disruption in service, all to the detriment of the victim/clients.

Agencies serving other types of victims talked about, and often grumbled about, the huge part of the VOCA budget that goes to domestic violence, far in excess of the required 10 percent under VOCA guidelines. Some view victims of crimes other than domestic violence and sexual assault as underserved. In some states these other victims have only the prosecutor's victim/witness staff to turn to, and we heard that these staff don't always function as "true" victim advocates – some criticize these staff as being more responsive to prosecutors' needs than to victims' needs. On our site visits, the victim service community clearly did not speak with one voice. As shown below, there were philosophical differences that affected the types of services provided by the non-profit agencies versus the government agencies. Some small volunteer-based non-profits resented the well-organized and financially savvy domestic violence programs. Even within the domestic violence and sexual assault networks, some sexual assault programs thought they were being short-changed compared to the larger domestic violence shelters. Although we only saw glimpses of turf battles, it is clear that the job of awarding VOCA subgrants could be quite controversial and subject to political pressure and personal favoritism. It is a tribute to our site visit states that we found a generally very high level of satisfaction with the VOCA grants office, whether the funding decisions were made by an independent administrator or a board appointed by the governor. While everyone felt more money was needed for victim services, the state VOCA administrators were not blamed for the shortfall. Of course, we were only speaking with programs that had received VOCA funding. An entirely different picture might emerge from victim service providers who have been rejected by VOCA administrators or who are unaware of the availability of VOCA funds.

Monitoring Systems

Monitoring by the state administrator is very important to ensure that funds are being used in compliance with program requirements and to best serve victims. This is particularly important in an environment of largely continuation funding. If there are implementation problems with a subgrant, they should be uncovered and addressed so that future as well as current funds are put to best use.

All of the six grant administrators monitor via review of required reports from subrecipients. In most states that is enhanced with site visits to check for compliance but limited staff restrict these visits to every three to five years unless there appears to be a problem. In that event, a site visit will be scheduled to deal with the problem as quickly as possible. In a couple of the smaller states, we were told that “everybody knows everybody in this field” so “we would hear if there were problems.” Again, a reliance on an informal process was common.

VOCA victim assistance administrators were reluctant to acknowledge that any of their funded programs were falling below service requirements. If programs were struggling to meet VOCA mandates, administrators said they would step in and help them come up to compliance. If it were a domestic violence or sexual assault program, they might also enlist the coalitions to help bring the program up to compliance. As a result, many programs have maintained support since the state VOCA program began. It was not surprising, therefore, that all but a couple of the direct service programs described their relationship with their state monitors as very good. Monitors were characterized as helpful, quick to answer questions, and available to them. A couple of program staff felt otherwise. One program administrator commented that the high turnover at the state assistance programs has resulted in many changes in their monitors. She further stated that subsequent monitors do not always honor the commitments or decisions made by previous ones and that monitors are reluctant to give decisions in writing, further inhibiting consistency in decision-making. For example, her monitor told her she could purchase a van with VOCA funds. After the van was bought, the decision was changed. Fortunately, the director of the agency agreed to buy the van with other agency funds.

Aside from these isolated complaints, monitoring by the state VOCA assistance program was generally viewed as minimal. Mostly it was accomplished through paper monitoring. For those who had experienced visits by their monitor or state audits, the process was described as reasonable. Typical comments were:

- “They bend over backwards to help. They do so much technical assistance. Even for bad programs, they do everything to get them up to speed. They truly believe with their heart and soul that the money needs to go out to the victims.”
- Our state director is “quite exceptional.” “It is important that she and the deputy director have come through grassroots organizations and are not just administrators. They are very victim focused.”
- From a program that was audited last year: “The audit focused on financial records and forms/documentation. It went fine; no problems were discovered.”

At a minimum, VOCA subgrantees are required to submit periodic reports and often the state VOCA office simply monitors the program's paperwork. Most interviewees felt that the required recordkeeping was not too burdensome. Here are some comments:

- VOCA grant process is “very easy to follow”, especially compared to HUD applications. Statistics are easy to maintain and they only need to count the number

served, services provided, number of crisis calls, and number of meals served. They keep these numbers anyway so no problem to give them to VOCA.

- The statistics required for the VOCA grant are not hard to obtain. The program has a good computer system and volunteers help pull the numbers needed. The only problem is every grantor wants the numbers slightly differently and there is a burden placed on the clients because they have to keep filling out paperwork.
- Keeping the required statistics for quarterly reports is “cumbersome” and takes time away from providing direct services. She wonders if anyone reads the reports she fills out as she has never had any feedback.

A common refrain was that reporting requirements should be consistent across all federal funding programs to make it easier for programs. Especially troubling was the different ways the various funding sources (e.g. VAWA, FVPSA, PHHS, Byre, and VOCA) count the number of clients served and ask for different demographic information on clients. Many suggested that a common reporting form would make their job considerably easier and allow them to spend more time with clients.

Among some victim assistance agencies we saw a growing awareness and acknowledgement of a need for more formal program oversight. Indeed a couple of programs suggested that monitoring was far too lax and should be stepped up to ensure programs were using their VOCA funds in accordance with their grants. Programs that function well and serve many victims are demoralized to see inadequate agencies also getting precious funding resources. They would welcome more active monitoring by the state and more requirements for more substantive reports.

Compliance with Notification Requirements for Compensation

Federal regulations require that programs that receive VOCA assistance funds inform victims about compensation. We found that is not always happening and that state VOCA administrators are not always actively requiring their subgrantees to meet this obligation by monitoring and enforcing compliance. Some of the subgrantees we spoke with were unaware or misinformed about the compensation program while others decided that their clients would not be interested and simply chose not to tell them about compensation. Prescreening by direct service providers can be useful when the providers have accurate information relevant to the application decision, but as discussed in the compensation report, this is very often not the case. The subgrantees were not concerned about losing their VOCA funding for failure to comply with compensation notification. Additional information about compensation is included in a later section of this chapter.

Delivery of Victim Services by VOCA Subgrantees

In this section we discuss the delivery of direct services to victims by VOCA-funded programs. Most of the information in this section comes from interviews and visits to the 18 programs selected for study and from the focus groups of victims who had been clients of five of

these programs. We've also included comments and information about service delivery from the state grants office's perspective. Past research (Roberts, 1990; McEwen, 1994; and McEwen and Nugent, 1990) identified as critical issues inadequate funding, staffing and volunteer issues, training needs, and the need for service expansion. We examined these and other issues in our site visit interviews.

Program Structure and Funding

We selected programs that varied in the type of victims served and services provided. Among the 18 program, most (14 of the 18) were non-profit agencies while four were governmental agencies. Five of the programs serve all types of crime victims; five serve domestic violence and sexual assault victims; one serves domestic violence and another serves sexual assault victims; two serve child abuse victims; one serves senior victims of all types of crime; one serves homicide survivors; one serves victims of drunk driving crashes; and one serves victims of juvenile property crimes. All offered some type of crisis counseling, but the majority referred clients out for long-term counseling while a minority of programs worked with clients from the inception of the call for help through long-term counseling. As a result, some programs worked with victims for very brief periods while others continued to help the victim for years.

The majority of programs included in the site visits had been in existence for a long time. The average length of years in service was 20 years. The youngest program was two years old and the oldest one 71 years old. A few had evolved from earlier programs and changed their names over the years. Programs generally were funded through a number of different sources. VOCA funding ranged from a low of \$16,000 to a high of \$1.4 million. In a few programs, VOCA was the entire funding source for the work they did with victims, but for most programs, VOCA was just one, albeit a very important, source of funding for victim services. None of the programs charged victims for services.

Program Staffing

The number of staff among the 18 programs ranged from a mere one or two to 102 with most having ten to fifteen. The number of volunteers ranged from none (although use of volunteers is a requirement, it can be waived under some circumstances) to over 20. All of the non-profit agencies had a board of directors.

Given the breadth of services provided among the 18 programs, it is not surprising that staffing patterns and the use of volunteers varied considerably. There were generally two schools of thought about staff qualifications and the use of volunteers among the programs. On the one hand, programs whose primary goal is to provide long-term professional therapeutic services tended to have much more stringent educational and licensing requirements as well as more intense training. Use of volunteers in these programs tended to be limited to help in the office, at fundraisers, and so on, but not for direct services. Volunteers were not seen as

qualified to provide therapeutic services. As one program administrator put it: “Victim advocacy is a profession in itself and we would never entrust a volunteer with such difficult situations.”

On the other hand, programs that are more grassroots in structure generally had less stringent educational requirements for staff and used volunteers more fully. For some programs, that translated into a minimal requirement of a BA and some type of experience working with vulnerable populations. Volunteers are commonly used for direct services and are seen as more central to the program, using them to answer hotline calls and assist in the provision of services.

Other interesting perspectives emerged regarding the use of volunteers. Some program administrators said the time to recruit, train, and supervise volunteers was not cost efficient for their program. They further noted that it is difficult to retain the interest of volunteers. Often volunteers have unrealistic expectations regarding their tasks with the agency, and are disappointed to find themselves doing routine paperwork. Others remarked that in small communities where “everybody knows everybody” victims are reluctant to talk to volunteers and prefer talking to professional staff. Still others said that volunteers do not have the flexibility to be with victims consistently over time during important events (such as escorting them to court for hearings), because many volunteers maintain paying jobs and are not available during daytime hours. On the positive side, some program administrators indicated they could not exist without a large cadre of volunteers.

Some programs encourage prior victims to apply for both staff and volunteer positions. This is particularly true in domestic violence and sexual assault programs where many staff members had been victims themselves. Focus group participants commented that “it helps a lot when they use victims as volunteers. You are not embarrassed to talk to them. If they are not a victim, it feels like they are judging you and they don’t have a clue.” We also found prior victims working as advocates in law enforcement and the court systems, as well as in state VOCA administrative offices. According to one victim advocate, “I personally have experience with that but it was not discussed when I applied. It’s been extremely helpful for me to have insight when talking to sexual assault victims. I’m more empathetic and tuned in to them.”

Some program directors said that prior victimization was not a consideration one way or another when choosing staff and volunteers. However, some would only accept prior victims who they felt had recovered from their victimization and would not impose their feelings on victims. As one program administrator put it: “You can’t make this work about you, nor can you do this type of thing out of anger. It is irresponsible to send victims out in the field without training or supervision. Using victims as counselors is fraught with a lot of problems.”

All of the programs had some training standards; most frequently they required 40 hours of training. On-the-job training was also used by the majority of the programs, with some employing a mentoring system whereby new staff would not work with clients until they apprenticed with seasoned staff. The majority of the programs took advantage of state-wide

training on victim's issues. For the most part, the training received high marks. Very few of the programs sent staff to federal trainings or programs. Nor did most use OVC resources, although a few had used the OVC web site or OVC manuals and publications. Only a handful of program administrators said they wanted more contact and information from OVC.

The victim advocates in law enforcement or prosecutors' offices thought there should be more mandatory cross-training. Often these advocates work alone and are the only person in the office focused on the victim. They would like training to help explain the criminal justice process to victims. And, they believe that prosecutors should be getting specific training on victim issues, e.g., how to handle a drunk driving crash victim differently than a domestic violence victim and how their expectations vary. As one victim advocate explained: "Most district attorneys are afraid of victims. They don't know how to act. They are uncomfortable. If a victim is emotional or has a need to tell her story, the attorneys don't have the frame of mind to just listen. If they knew more about victim needs, their comfort level might be better." Moreover, training of prosecutors might influence them to see the importance of these positions. At present the positions are hired and overseen by individual prosecutors. There are no uniform qualifications. Some just re-classify their secretaries without changing their job requirements. Despite concerns expressed by program administrators that their staff are woefully underpaid and overworked in stressful positions, not all reported high rates of turnover or burnout among staff. How do they prevent burnout? A number of tactics were named, as represented in these comments:

- "We encourage the staff to talk to each other and support each other to help them deal with the stress of their job."
- "We cannot increase their wages but we try to increase quality of life measures, for example, if they have to go out on a call at night, we give them the morning off."
- "We are planning to conduct a comparison of salaries for other comparable service providers to see if our salaries are equitable. We will present our results to our Board."
- "We have retreats and a banquet for volunteers to show we appreciate them."
- "We allow our staff to vent among themselves and with us to avoid burnout."

The need for higher pay, particularly for nonprofit service workers, was a common refrain. Advocates in the criminal justice agencies had higher salaries and more benefits, causing some resentment among their counterparts in the nonprofit world. Some programs have become very dependent on interns to meet staffing and direct service needs, which hinders follow-up support services in particular, and more generally causes service disruption and confusion as interns leave for the summer, quit, or are available on a part-time basis only. Other unmet staffing needs include the need for specialized staff fluent in foreign languages such as Spanish, Asian languages, and sign language; the need for more administrative support; and the need for a fundraiser to relieve this burden on the administrator.

Relationships with Other Programs and Networks

None of the programs worked alone to service the diverse needs of victims. Most enjoyed good relationships with law enforcement and the courts and relied on them for referrals and worked with them as they advocated for their victims. They also coordinated and cooperated with other agencies in their community to help victims. For example, programs that provide crisis counseling often worked with programs in their community that provide long-term counseling and helped the victim transition from their program to the long-term program. Non-profit victim advocacy programs talked about the importance of working cooperatively with governmental victim witness staff in order to effectively advocate for victims and gain information about what was happening with the criminal case. All said they had mechanisms in place to refer victims to other services in the community if the program did not directly provide needed services, thus victims were not left to broker needed services on their own. Coordination and cooperation among agencies was achieved by a number of means. For example, programs:

- Provided training to law enforcement to educate them about the services they offer
- Provided brochures for police to hand to victims describing their program
- Served with law enforcement and other community agencies on joint task forces or coalitions to discuss how best to help victims in their community
- Implemented MOUs (Memorandum of Understanding) among agencies serving victims
- Hosted joint trainings among their program staff, law enforcement, court staff, governmental victim service agencies, and medical, mental health, housing, and other agencies to provide a web of services to victims

Individual advocates often serve on several statewide councils and committees and find this worthwhile in terms of trying to help change victim policy. Those who volunteer often may get asked to be on special projects.

The most commonly heard refrain from the programs in our sample was that no one agency can do it alone and that victims are best served when criminal justice and non-profit agencies pulled together to serve victims. That was best accomplished when agencies clearly understood their respective roles. Consider the following examples/comments:

- A program reported having over 80 different cooperative agreements with agencies in their community, 20 to 25 of these with numerous law enforcement agencies that serve the county.
- A program offers educational workshop about family violence, as well as prevention and community resources, to schools, community organizations, churches, social service agencies, and professional organizations. In addition, a staff member volunteers with the Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) and rides along with the police in order to promote rapport and offer crisis intervention immediately at the scene.

- A program started a one-day education program particularly for patrol officers because they are the first responders. The curriculum was created through collaboration among law enforcement, social services, and tribal staff. It is culturally sensitive for their clientele. To date 100 officers have been trained.
- A program reported an “excellent” relationship with the prosecutor. The prosecutor gave them office space in his office for one of their advocates. Their advocate works hand-in-hand with the prosecutor’s victim witness staff. The two advocates understand their distinct roles and responsibilities and their mutual desire to fully serve the victim.
- Another program said “Prosecutors and our staff have a very comfortable and collaborative relationship. There are no turf problems.” The positive relationship extends to victim witness staff in the prosecutor’s office as both agencies understand their different and complementary roles.

Several nonprofits had concerns about different philosophical approaches taken by advocates in the criminal justice system versus those in the private sector. Victim advocates in prosecutor's offices were described as “only interested in seeking justice,” “offender focused,” and “too directive” with victims. Nonprofits were seen as more “survivor centered” and “empowering” for victims. One advocate thought nonprofits should receive priority for VOCA funding. She thought it was very complicated for victim witness staff in prosecutors offices to advocate for victims when they work for the system. It can get ticklish when a victim does not want to cooperate with prosecutors. One victim advocate working “in the system” agreed: “Some victims, e.g., domestic violence victims who don’t want to see the batterer put in jail, do choose not to use me. I am seen as an enemy because I work in the state’s attorney’s office. That’s OK, because we can plant a few seeds with that person and maybe next time she will want to prosecute.” Collaboration between public-based advocates and non-profit advocates is difficult because public-based advocates may not be able to protect the confidentiality of the victim's disclosures. The advocates in the non-profits have client-counselor privilege, so victims may be more likely to confide in them.

Victims' Satisfaction with Services

The next chapter on the victim survey includes in-depth feedback from the clients of these programs. We report here only the comments of the few victims who participated in the focus groups.

Almost without exception, victims raved about the services provided by the victim service program and advocates who served them. Common themes were that the advocates were always there for them, the advocates cared about them and understood their pain; advocates were non-judgmental; advocates helped their children; advocates helped other family members understand the impact of victimizations; advocates listened to what they had to say; and advocates helped them carry out safety planning. Listen to what they had to say:

- “They don’t press you to say anything. They are just so friendly that you can talk without embarrassment. They give you their home numbers.”
- “Throughout the process she told me about everything. I was pretty hot-headed. She constantly kept me updated without being asked to. I didn’t want the prosecutor to do a plea bargain. She tried to keep peace between me and the prosecutor because he wanted to plea bargain and get rid of the case. She respected my feelings that I wanted to have a criminal trial. If I lost at trial, so be it.”
- “She offered to read my (victim impact) statement half way through because I was crying. It was the hardest time before the guy goes to jail and she was there. It was awesome.”
- “All of the people at (the program) said something to help ease my pain.”
- Even after services terminated, victims said the staff of the program brought them a Christmas tree and presents for the kids. Throughout the year, they were able to select items from the service program’s thrift shop at no cost. They especially liked that they were able to *select* what they wanted and were not just handed any old thing. “Everything they did was great. They treated us with respect.”

Victims heard about services in a number of ways. A few knew about the program prior to their victimization but most only learned about the program after their victimization. They became aware via program outreach to them, family members or friends, law enforcement, prosecutors, or the court, or referral from another service agency. Only a couple of victims said they wished they had learned about services earlier; the vast majority obtained services when they were ready to do so. Greater program outreach and advertising were recommended by some victims.

One common complaint was that more free counseling should be available for protracted periods of time. Also, more counselors trained to help crime victims are needed. And counseling at times convenient to working victims, on nights and weekends, was recommended. Many victims, particularly victims of sexual assault by family members, felt that peer support groups facilitated by a professional counselor would be better than individual counseling – victims would feel more comfortable talking to other victims.

A few other specific complaints were voiced. A number of shelter residents complained about the lack of transportation and the paucity of public transportation. For example, one focus group participant told a story about extensive dental work needed because of battering. She did not have transportation back and forth to the dentist. Also, the rules at the shelter prohibited the use of painkillers. So, she had six teeth pulled at once instead of getting crowns. Two victims complained about shelter rules (e.g. not leaving children unattended) in the shelter program focus group, but even they were quick to add that they understood the need for rules.

A few victims noted with dismay that the advocate did not have the power to affect what happened in court. As one victim put it: “She (the advocate) was effective in the power she had

which wasn't much. If her role is to make you feel good and be there when you are angry and crying, that is fine. But you need more. Judges have to understand the importance of domestic violence cases. A warm and fuzzy advocate is not solving the problem of the court and the prosecutor taking the case seriously. She (the advocate) kept saying she was sorry, but I wanted due process." Indeed, dissatisfaction with law enforcement and the court system ran extremely high as discussed below.

Victims' Rights and the Criminal Justice System Response

Recent studies have found that, while victim rights are seen as very important, many victims were not notified of their rights (National Center for Victims of Crime, 1998) or did not exercise their rights for various reasons (Davis, Henderson, and Rabbitt, 2002). A study of victims' rights in Rhode Island found that while implementation of rights was generally satisfactory for at least some victims, a number of improvements were still needed (Botec Analysis Corporation, 2001). A survey of 4000 adults in nine states found that the majority of the public – especially those who had been victims – felt the criminal justice system needed major changes to improve how victims are treated and how criminal cases are resolved (Schulman, Ronca, and Bucuvalas, 1999).

This study, like past research, found shortcomings in victims rights implementation and case handling practices by justice system agencies. The majority of program staff felt that their state had sufficient rights for victims *on the books*. The problems come with the practice. For example, some law enforcement officers are making dual arrests in domestic violence cases and not enforcing the primary aggressor law. Some judges are ordering domestic violence victims to mediation with their batterers. Some victims are not given sufficient notification of their rights to exercise them fully. Most staff felt things have improved considerably for victims but noted that more progress is needed.

Victims in the focus groups had few positive things to say about law enforcement. Only a handful thought the police cared and did their job. Domestic violence victims particularly reported that the police failed to do anything, blamed the victim, and/or took a very long time to respond (as long as an hour). One victim complained that the police did not respond promptly, because he had to wait to respond until another patrol car was available. She couldn't understand why two officers were needed for their safety while she was left alone with her abuser. "They have guns and are trained, but they left me alone with a crazy man until they had two of them. Does that make any sense?" Despite these negative comments, the most critical comments were aimed at the court system.

Very common refrains were that courts were much too lenient on defendants in meting out sentences and that prosecutors "gave away the courthouse" with overly lenient plea-bargains. Almost every victim who voiced an opinion about the courts agreed with these sentiments. Here is what many victims told us:

- “You only know how horrible the criminal justice system is when you become a part of it.”
- “Need leadership from the top, from judges to make the system responsive. The system needs to be prodded and pushed. This is a joke. Plea-bargain is bunch of baloney. Probation needs more people to keep tabs on offenders.”
- Offenders “don’t get enough time. The court system is the absolute worst. They don’t start on time. They are totally unprofessional.”
- The court “has no respect for victim safety, rights, or victim’s perspective.”
- “He pled guilty to a minor offense, served a few days in custody, and was released. That’s ridiculous after what he did to me.”

Although focus group participants blamed the system, not the advocates, for shortfalls during the prosecution and sentencing of their cases, they also expressed a desire for more and better legal advice to help with custody, divorce, visitation, and restraining orders. They felt that the VOCA paid counselors were providing “legal advice” but were often off-target because they were not lawyers.

- “The advocate was there always to listen. But I wish she had given more information about restraining orders [against sexual offender]. I should have been told to get a lawyer.”
- Other victims suggested that crime victim money should be used to get every victim “a top notch lawyer.” The state has a lawyer and the defendant gets a free lawyer. Only the victim is unrepresented, according to a number of victims. While in theory the prosecutor represents the victim as well as the rest of society, it clearly did not feel that way to many victims.
- Fear of escalating violence and uncertainty of the response by law enforcement led one victim to take the law into her own hands. She took her children to a safe place, got a gun, and waited for the batterer to return. He never returned due to an arrest for violence unrelated to the client.

Victim Compensation

The chapter on victim compensation suggests a number of improvements to programs’ policies and practices, based on input from state compensation administrators, members of oversight bodies, advocates, direct service providers, focus group participants and claimants who participated in our telephone survey. This chapter focuses on suggestions for improvements in direct service providers’ compensation-related services to victims, and how these enhancements could be supported by state compensation programs.

The extent to which program staff were aware of, and helped, victims with compensation varied considerably. Staff at one of the programs had never even heard of victim compensation and said in their six-year history, they had no knowledge that any of their clients applied for compensation. Another program knew about compensation but decided their clients would not be interested. Their reasoning was that their services were provided for free so those services

would not be covered. They further concluded that their clients would not file for compensation because it was too intrusive for clients and too much paperwork. When pressed if some of their clients who were victims of domestic abuse could benefit from relocation funds, they replied that none of their clients wanted to leave the community. Basically, they decided these things based on the culture in which the program operated without directly asking clients or explaining compensation to them.

Among other programs, some type of outreach was made to victims to inform them about compensation. Most programs had brochures in their office and helped victims with the application as well as securing police and medical records. A couple of exceptions were non-profit agencies that relied on prosecution or law enforcement-based programs to help victims with compensation.

Although most programs made at least a “gesture” in the direction of compensation, we found no obvious protocols used by service providers to determine the compensation needs of their clients. The hotline workers do not ask questions about financial need. The shelters and crisis centers think primarily in terms of crisis and do not look into the need for long term counseling. All of the providers could benefit from training on the possibilities of victim compensation.

All in all, staff members were generally unaware about the decisions made on compensation claims because their involvement ended after they helped victims with the applications. There were, however, several programs that remain engaged in the process and could speak about it. In two states, programs reported backlogs in the processing of claims and an adversarial relationship between victim advocates and victim compensation staff in the past. In both of these states, there has been a dramatic turnaround with a reduction in backlogs and increase in victim-friendly compensation staff according to program staff interviewed.

- “Recently, compensation has been a bit easier on requirements. For example, some claims that previously would have been immediately rejected based on contributory misconduct now get closer attention, and the standards used to determine these types of claims are not as strictly defined. There used to be a lot of judgment and blaming, especially regarding contributory misconduct cases.”
- “Claims processing time has decreased significantly over the past few years. Whereas before it could take close to a year to hear about your claim, now it generally takes three months. And compensation has raised the monetary caps on certain services.”

But obstacles remain. Frequently identified issues include: the need for the victim to report the crime to the police (especially in programs that serve domestic violence and sexual assault victims); the need to report the crime within certain time limitations (for example, one state required reporting within 48 hours even though the time limit to conduct a forensic exam for sexual assault victims was 72 hours); illiteracy among victims; the need to have a social security

number to apply for compensation (a real problem for migrants); difficulty in completing forms; and perceptions of compensation policies and programs as rigid and unresponsive to victims' needs.

We found in our focus groups that victims were largely unaware or misinformed about victim compensation. In two groups, none of the victims had ever heard about compensation. In the third group, only one victim had heard about it and that was months after the incident (very likely she had missed the filing deadline). In the fourth group, victims thought compensation was limited to indigents and none of the victims (including one who happened to be a law enforcement officer) had ever seen a compensation application. In the fifth group, a couple of victims had applied for compensation. In one case, she was denied due to contributory misconduct (her murdered son's possible involvement with drugs), but she appealed with the help of the program (the appeal was pending).

Not everyone was negative or uninformed about compensation. One shelter director reported that they have the compensation applications at their programs and help women apply. She reported that the compensation staff are "easy to work with" and "easy to access." She further noted that the state compensation director had recently provided training to her staff about the compensation process. As discussed in our compensation report, there is a definite trend towards more victim-centered and flexible compensation eligibility requirements and the word needs to get out to the field more quickly and more broadly.

A single discussion between a victim and an advocate about compensation may not be enough to effectively provide assistance with compensation. Victims in crisis may be shocked and traumatized, and have so many issues to address that it is very difficult to process information about compensation policies and requirements. As one advocate phrased it: "We give the compensation packets to victims as soon as we make contact, but they often bring it home and do not look at it for six months. They have to be told over and over again before the information sinks in."

THE CLIENTS' PERSPECTIVE: FINDINGS FROM A SURVEY OF CLIENTS OF VOCA-FUNDED VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

We conducted a brief telephone survey with 594⁸⁰ clients of 17⁸¹ VOCA-funded direct service programs we included in our second round of site visits. The goal of the survey was to describe clients' perspectives on services provided to victims, the usefulness of those services, and how policies and practices could be improved to better address victims' needs. Specifically, the survey explored the following areas:

⁸⁰ This is 83 percent of our planned sample size of 720 participants.

⁸¹ One program did not have a sufficiently large caseload to provide the requested number of clients within a reasonably recent timeframe. Because this program serves an important and understudied population – Native American victims – we still made a site visit to this program, and conducted a focus group with clients in lieu of the phone survey

- Services needed in the aftermath of a crime⁸²
- Services provided by VOCA-funded programs as well as a variety of other sources
- Clients' opinions of the services received from the VOCA-funded program and how helpful the services were
- Brief summary of the client's service history with the VOCA-funded program, including how the victim learned of the program, how quickly he or she began receiving services, the length of the service period, and reasons for termination of services
- Clients' experiences with the criminal justice system
- Clients' experiences with crime victims' compensation
- Summary information briefly describing the crime and victim/client demographics

During the first round of site visits we asked program staff to provide us with names, contact information, and basic demographic information on at least 60 adult clients who had been served within a fairly recent timeframe. We conducted this 15- to 20-minute phone survey from March, 2001 to October, 2001. This survey provides descriptive information on clients' perceptions of services received and usefulness of the services. This is the first broad-based survey to focus exclusively on victims' perceptions of a variety of different types of programs supported with VOCA funds. A survey of a comparison sample of victims who had not been served by VOCA-funded programs, or by any programs, was outside the scope of the study's purpose and resources. While client surveys without comparison groups of victims not served do have limitations, they have provided valuable descriptive information in this and other recent studies of victim services (Crime Victims' Institute, 1999; Hare, Ford, Barton, and Moland, 1998; Stevenson, Myrent, Sifford, Lurigio, Davis, and Norris, 2002; and Voth, 2001).

After a summary in the next section, we describe the survey sample, findings from analyses of their responses to the survey questions, and recommendations for improvements to direct service policies and practices. The survey is presented in Appendix H, along with descriptive statistics on each of the survey items. The survey took an average of 15 to 20 minutes, and we paid participants \$10 for their participation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This survey was conducted with a sample of clients of different types of VOCA-funded programs in various locations around the nation. While the sample does represent diversity on type of service program (private non-profit and public-based programs), crime type and other characteristics of the crimes the victims had suffered, and victim demographics, limitations on the sampling and survey methods make it necessary to caution the reader not to assume that the findings from this survey necessarily represent clients of VOCA-funded victim service programs

⁸² Our survey assessed victims' needs as a basis for understanding the usefulness of VOCA-funded services received. Other studies (eg, Brickman, 2002 and Rienick, Hoctor Mulmat, and Pennell, 1997) have also assessed victims' needs and services received, but have not focused exclusively on VOCA-funded services.

in general. In addition, it is not always clear how to interpret some findings because of unavoidable confounds between certain variables (administrative type of program, use of consent procedures in the sampling phase, and type of crime). With those caveats in mind, the findings from this survey suggest that:

- *Victims typically have about four different types of service needs in the aftermath of the crime, and the nature of these needs varies widely, with services to assist in psychological recovery figuring prominently.* Other common needs were for criminal justice system advocacy/information and service needs assessments/referrals. Victims of certain crimes -- including domestic violence, sexual assault, drunk driving crashes, and crimes where the offender used a weapon -- are particularly likely to present service programs with a number of different needs. Programs must be prepared to respond to the range of needs presented to serve their clients more completely. For some programs, this may mean expanding the types of services offered.
- *Clients reported that the VOCA-funded programs' services were fairly comprehensive, addressing many but not all of their needs, on the whole.* The longer the client worked with the service program the more comprehensive the services provided. This means that, to serve clients better, many programs will need to increase their caseloads by working with more clients for longer periods of time. Increased caseloads mean more program resources will be needed.
- *Many VOCA-funded program clients also turned to a variety of other sources to meet their crime-related needs, including a range of formal help sources (including other victim service providers, other types of social service or healthcare providers, and criminal justice personnel) and informal sources (family, friends, and other personal resources).* Clearly, VOCA-funded victim service providers need to coordinate with other providers in the community, and many programs do coordinate, to avoid gaps or duplication of services to shared clients. This coordination should reach across traditional boundaries of "victim service providers" and include those working in other fields, such as healthcare. Coordination efforts, while very critical, are not considered direct service and so are not allowable uses for VOCA funding. Programs without other sources of administrative support may be hard-pressed to implement these crucial activities.
- *Some victims have needs that are unmet by any source, including but not limited to the VOCA-funded service program.* These needs were most often for criminal justice information/advocacy, financial/creditor assistance, and service needs assessments/referrals, clearly suggesting useful directions for future program development. Victims who are members of racial/ethnic minority groups were the most likely to have unmet needs, indicating that program efforts should concentrate particularly on developing ways to meet these clients' needs.
- *Clients had very positive perceptions of VOCA-funded programs and their services.* Clients were particularly satisfied when they were older, had worked with the program longer, and had all their needs met by some help source, either the VOCA-funded program or another source. This again underscores the need for additional resources to support program caseloads and enhanced community coordination so

that victim service providers can refer clients to additional sources of help in their community. Most clients, particularly clients of private non-profit providers, saw their programs as using an “empowerment” rather than a “persuasion” approach to service. Empowerment strategies were associated with more comprehensive services and greater satisfaction with the program.

- *Despite the high levels of satisfaction with program services, some clients did offer suggestions for improvements.* These most often centered around improved provision of information (including service referrals), support for the program’s infrastructure, and client contact. These suggestions emphasize, again, the need for additional program resources to expand services, and support for administrative activities such as community coordination efforts.
- *Clients tend to learn about VOCA-funded service programs most often from program outreach activities, and they often start receiving services fairly soon after the crime, which puts programs in a position to offer many needed services.* Law enforcement agencies were also a fairly common source of referrals to the program, but referrals from other justice system personnel or other community agencies were more rare. Training and the provision of referral resource materials to other agencies that contact victims are additional administrative activities that could benefit victims, but may be hampered by limited funding for administrative activities.
- *Clients often sustained the relationship with VOCA-funded service providers for lengthy time periods, and those who had stopped receiving services had most often ended the service relationship because the services were no longer needed.* These are additional indicators of clients’ high levels of satisfaction with the programs and the usefulness of their services.
- *Survey participants were less satisfied with their experiences with the criminal justice system, although levels of satisfaction were still fairly high on the whole.* Efforts by victim service programs to strengthen the justice system’s response to offenders, primarily in the form of more severe punishment, would fulfill a major unmet service need of many victims and address the primary source of victims’ dissatisfaction with the justice system. This is particularly true for victims of certain crimes, including child abuse, domestic violence, and drunk driving crashes. Victims who were served by public-based programs, however, were more satisfied with the justice system experience, which may indicate that these programs are well-placed to assist victims in their needs related to the criminal case. Some victims also reported problems with how justice personnel handled the case, including failure to protect victims, cultural misunderstandings, system inefficiencies, and failure to respond to victims’ rights, needs, or input.
- *Survey respondents’ experiences with state victim compensation programs indicate that compensation policies and practices are generally responsive to victims’ needs.* VOCA-funded programs seem to be functioning well at providing timely information about compensation to victims with crime-related expenses. The types of expenses eligible for compensation correspond with victims’ most commonly incurred expenses, with the exception of property loss and some attorneys’ fees.

Our analyses of who did and did not apply for compensation did not indicate any barriers based on type of VOCA-funded program, client demographics, or some crime characteristics. Non-applicants' reasons for not applying for compensation did not often indicate a gap in services, although some victims' reasons suggested a misunderstanding of the compensation program or a failure to prioritize financial concerns in the face of the many needs victims often encounter. Improved information and assistance from direct service providers should help potential applicants overcome these barriers. In addition, improved communication from compensation programs may help increase applications from certain victim groups designed to benefit from recent innovations, including victims of child abuse and domestic violence.

The Survey Sample

Before presenting findings from the survey questions, it is important to understand how we selected the survey sample and who participated in the survey. This is critical information for assessing the validity of the survey results and their applicability to other victim populations.

Sampling Methods

Our goal in selecting the survey sample was to include a cross-section of clients of the site visit programs. Since these programs were selected to obtain diversity on program administration (private non-profits and public-based), types of crime addressed, and client population demographics, we expected to obtain diversity on these factors in our survey sample as well. We only included adult clients (ages 18 and over), and we targeted clients who had been served recently (to minimize memory losses) but were not actively involved in an ongoing service relationship (to increase the chance that our respondents had reached some sort of closure with the program, and to avoid any possibility that survey participation might influence the service experience in any way).

Program staff developed the sample base for us by using forms and procedures supplied by the research team to review their client records, apply our specified eligibility criteria, and provide identifying information for clients selected for the survey. In addition, 12 of the 17 programs contacted clients in advance to gain consent for releasing their information to the research team.

We completed surveys with 594 of the 1121 clients identified by the 17 programs as appropriate for survey participation. This is a 53 percent response rate. The primary obstacle to gaining survey participation was the difficulty of reaching clients by phone to administer the survey – only 66 percent of those selected for the survey contact were reached by the research team. The most common reason researchers could not reach clients was due to a lack of valid contact information, such as a current telephone number.

However, once clients were contacted by interviewers, 80 percent of them did in fact participate in the survey. The survey sample should be viewed as a convenience sample rather

than a nationally representative sample, for reasons related to program selection methods, sample selection methods, and patterns of survey completion by selected clients. This means that caution should be used when attempting to generalize the findings from this survey to clients of VOCA-funded programs across the nation as a whole. Moreover, it should be noted that since we sampled from VOCA-funded programs, crime victims who do not access these types of services, or perhaps any formal services, are not represented in this sample at all.

Appendix I presents a detailed discussion of the sampling methods, survey methods, available statistics, and the limitations of these methods. This appendix also contains a number of attachments presenting the sampling procedures and forms provided to program staff.

Characteristics of the Survey Sample

Client Demographics. The 594 clients who participated in our survey were predominantly White women from young adulthood through middle age who have at least a high school education (although some men, some members of other racial/ethnic groups, and some younger adults as well as older adults also participated). This profile is clearly not in line with that of many victims of crime. Rennison (2001) found from National Crime Victimization Survey data that victims are disproportionately teenagers, males, and Black. However, the sample may better fit the profile of victims who access these types of services; in the absence of national data on client demographics this is not possible to judge. See Table 15 for more detailed information on survey participants' demographics.

Table 15. Demographics of Survey Participants

	Number in sample	Percent of total
Sex:		
Male	106	18%
Female	488	82%
Race/ethnicity:		
White	415	70%
Black/African-American	94	16%
Hispanic/Latino(a)	60	10%
Asian/South Asian/Pacific Islander	11	2%
Native American	6	1%
Other	5	1%
Age groups:		
18-25	71	12%
26-39	213	36%
40-59	241	41%
60+	68	11%
Education completed:		
Some high school or less	90	15%
High school diploma or GED	176	30%
Post-secondary business/trade school	32	5%
Some college	157	26%
College degree	102	17%
Post-graduate education	34	6%

Client/Victim Relationships. Most of the VOCA-funded program clients who participated in our survey were the direct or primary victim of the crime, at 73 percent. Of the 162 survey participants who were secondary or indirect victims (27 percent of the total sample), 67 percent were a parent or parent-figure of the primary victim, 10 percent were a spouse or partner, and 20 percent were other family members.

Crime Characteristics. As expected, survey participants were victimized by a very broad array of crimes. Table 16 shows that various types of crime are represented in our survey sample in fairly close proportion to their representation among victims served by VOCA-funded programs across the nation in 2000 (using OVC data). Our sample included more homicide, drunk driving crash, and robbery victims or co-victims than seen in national statistics, at least partially because we included one program dedicated to serving homicide co-victims and another dedicated to serving drunk driving crash victims, and we enjoyed a high degree of success in surveying their clients. Our sample may somewhat underrepresent family violence victims and victims of “other” types of crime, compared with national statistics on victims served by VOCA-funded programs.

Table 16. Types of crime

	Percent of survey sample	Percent of clients of VOCA programs across the nation in 2000 ⁸³
Child physical and/or sexual abuse	9%	12%
Domestic violence, elder abuse, stalking	36%	51%
Adult sexual assault	7%	6%
Adult survivors of child physical/sexual abuse	3%	2%
Homicide	12%	2%
Drunk driving crashes	7%	2%
Assault (physical, non-domestic)	9%	7%
Robbery	15%	3%
Other (e.g., financial exploitation)	8%	16%

Nearly one-third of our survey participants (32 percent) had faced an armed offender during the crime. Over half of these cases (58 percent) were gun crimes; the other weapons were cutting/stabbing instruments, objects used to hit or throw at the victim, and chemical or burning agents. A minority of the sample, 12 percent, were victimized at their place of work.

Victim/Offender Relationships. The victims in over two-thirds of our survey cases – 68 percent – knew the offender. In these 401 cases:

- 52 percent of the victims had a current or former intimate relationship with the offender (e.g., spouses, dating partners, fiancés)
- 13 percent had other familial relationships (parent/child, siblings, extended family members)
- 4 percent were unrelated but connected through family members (e.g., son’s girlfriend, husband’s ex-wife, mother’s boyfriend, and many others)
- 22 percent were friends, roommates, neighbors, landlords/tenants, or connected through work or school
- 16 percent were acquaintances – the victim knew the offender by sight and possibly name but there was no further connection⁸⁴

Program Characteristics. Our survey participants were served by 17 programs which, as a group, represent a great deal of diversity on various program characteristics. The previous chapter on site visit findings describes these programs in detail. Table 17 shows how many of the survey respondents were served by private non-profit versus public-based programs

⁸³ Source: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/fund/vocanpr_va00.html.

⁸⁴ These percentages total more than 100 because multiple answers were possible, as in the case of multiple offenders.

(including those based in law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, and courts), and by programs targeting victims of specific types of crime. We also include information on the number of clients who were contacted by the service program for consent to release their names to the research team, and those who were not contacted by the program in advance.

Table 17. Characteristics of Programs Serving Survey Participants

	Number of clients in survey sample	Percent of total
Program administration:		
Public-based	148	25%
Private non-profit	446	75%
Types of crime served by program:		
Domestic violence/sexual assault program	212	36%
Physical/sexual child abuse program	13	2%
Program for senior victims	42	7%
Program for victims of drunk driving crashes	37	6%
Homicide survivors' program	44	7%
Program for victims of property crimes by juveniles	35	6%
Program for victims of all types of crime	211	36%
Program's consent procedures:		
Program made consent contact with client prior to releasing information	409	69%
Program did not make consent contact	185	31%

These variables – program administration, types of crimes represented by surveyed victims, and consent procedures – are all highly confounded. That is, these variables are systematically and inextricably intertwined. To illustrate:

Table 18. Relationship Between Type of Program Administration and Use of Consent Procedures for Surveyed Victims⁸⁵

	Private non-profit programs	Public-based programs
Program made consent contact with client prior to releasing information	409	0
Program did not make consent contact with client prior to releasing information	37	148

⁸⁵ Statistically significant, $\chi^2(1)=435.8$, $p<.001$.

Table 19. Relationship Between Type of Program Administration and Types of Crime Represented by Surveyed Victims⁸⁶

	Private non-profit programs	Public-based programs
Child abuse	56	4
Domestic violence	168	31
Sexual assault	33	1
Drunk driving crashes	39	0
Homicide	68	0
Assault	17	23
Robbery	36	60

Table 20. Relationship Between Consent Contact Procedures and Types of Crime Represented by Surveyed Victims⁸⁷

	Clients contacted for consent	Clients not contacted for consent
Child abuse	56	4
Domestic violence	168	31
Sexual assault	33	1
Drunk driving crashes	2	37
Homicide	68	0
Assault	17	23
Robbery	36	60

These tables show that, with only a few exceptions, private non-profit programs made client consent contacts and were disproportionately likely to provide survey participants who had suffered certain types of crimes (child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, drunk driving crashes, and homicide). Public-based programs did not make client consent contacts and were more likely to provide survey participants who had suffered other types of crime (assault and robbery).

This pattern is due to the nature of the victim service system. Private non-profit providers typically specialize in one or a few types of crime, while public-based programs serve victims of all types of crime that come to the attention of the justice system agency in which they are based. Private agencies' records are highly proprietary, while public agencies' records (to some extent) are more likely to be considered public domain. Since it was considered very important to include both public-based and non-profit providers in this evaluation, as well as victims of a broad range of crimes, these confounds were largely unavoidable. We attempted to minimize the extent of confounding by including several non-profit programs that serve a broad variety of victims, often through a contractual relationship with a prosecutor's office.

⁸⁶ Statistically significant, $\chi^2(6)=170.4$, $p<.001$.

⁸⁷ Statistically significant, $\chi^2(6)=220.8$, $p<.001$.

However, this confound still exists and must be considered when interpreting survey findings. For example, when more than one of these variables is associated with a survey item, it may not be possible to decide which association is the meaningful or substantive connection. This caveat will be repeated where applicable in subsequent presentations of analytic results in this chapter.

Clients' Needs and Help Sources

Crime can have broad-based and far-reaching impact on its victims. Many service programs strive to provide comprehensive services to clients, to address many of their needs for services. An evaluation of the operation and impact of VOCA-funded programs must understand what needs program clients have, and whether clients turn to the program for help.

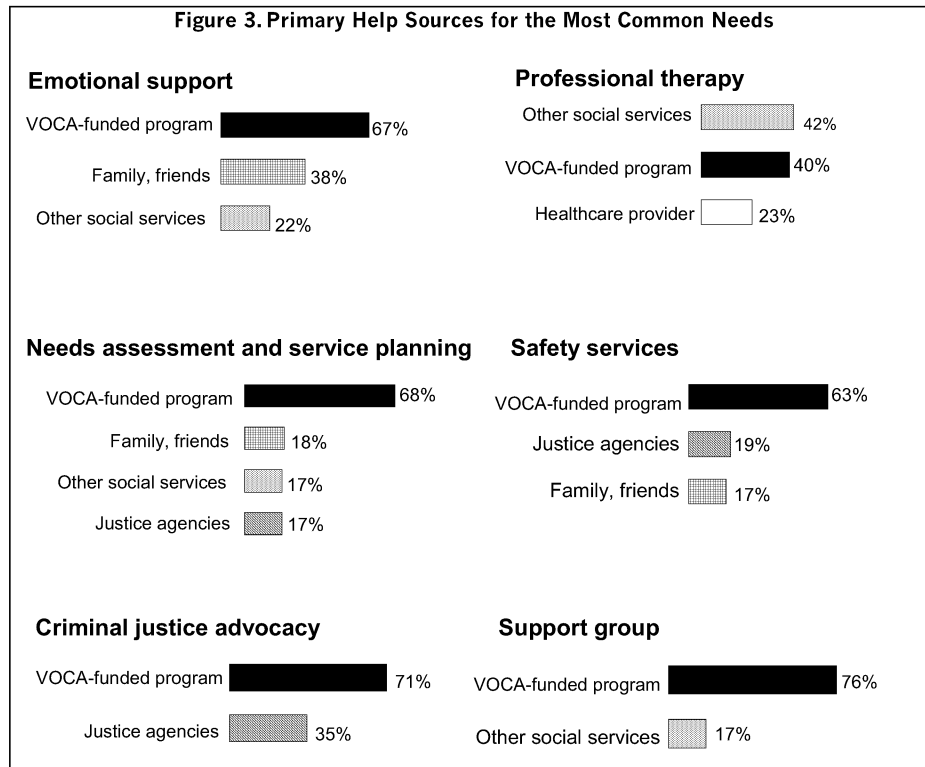
We presented survey participants with a list of 18 different types of help they may have needed in the aftermath of the crime. For each type of help they reported needing, we asked them whether they received that type of help from:

- the VOCA-funded program (by name)
- another victim service, hotline, religious, social service, or counseling agency (which may or may not be VOCA-funded as well)
- a health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, or hospital)
- a criminal justice agency (law enforcement, prosecutor, court, or correctional agency)
- family, friends, or other personal acquaintances
- an employee assistance program
- another type of help source

Survey respondents reported an average of four different types of service needs resulting from the crime, ranging across respondents from no service needs (for 34 respondents, six percent of the total sample) to 17 different types of service needs. A few emerged as the most common types of needs. At least one in four survey participants reported needing one or more of the following six types of services:

- | | |
|--|------------|
| ▪ Emotional support: | 74 percent |
| ▪ Needs assessment and service planning: | 58 percent |
| ▪ Criminal justice advocacy: | 55 percent |
| ▪ Professional therapy | 46 percent |
| ▪ Safety services | 29 percent |
| ▪ Support group with other victims | 26 percent |

Services to meet these needs are provided by a variety of different types of help sources. The VOCA-funded program was the leading provider for nearly all these services, but other sources were used extensively as well. For each type of need, Figure 3 shows the help sources used by at least 15 percent of the victims who reported that need.

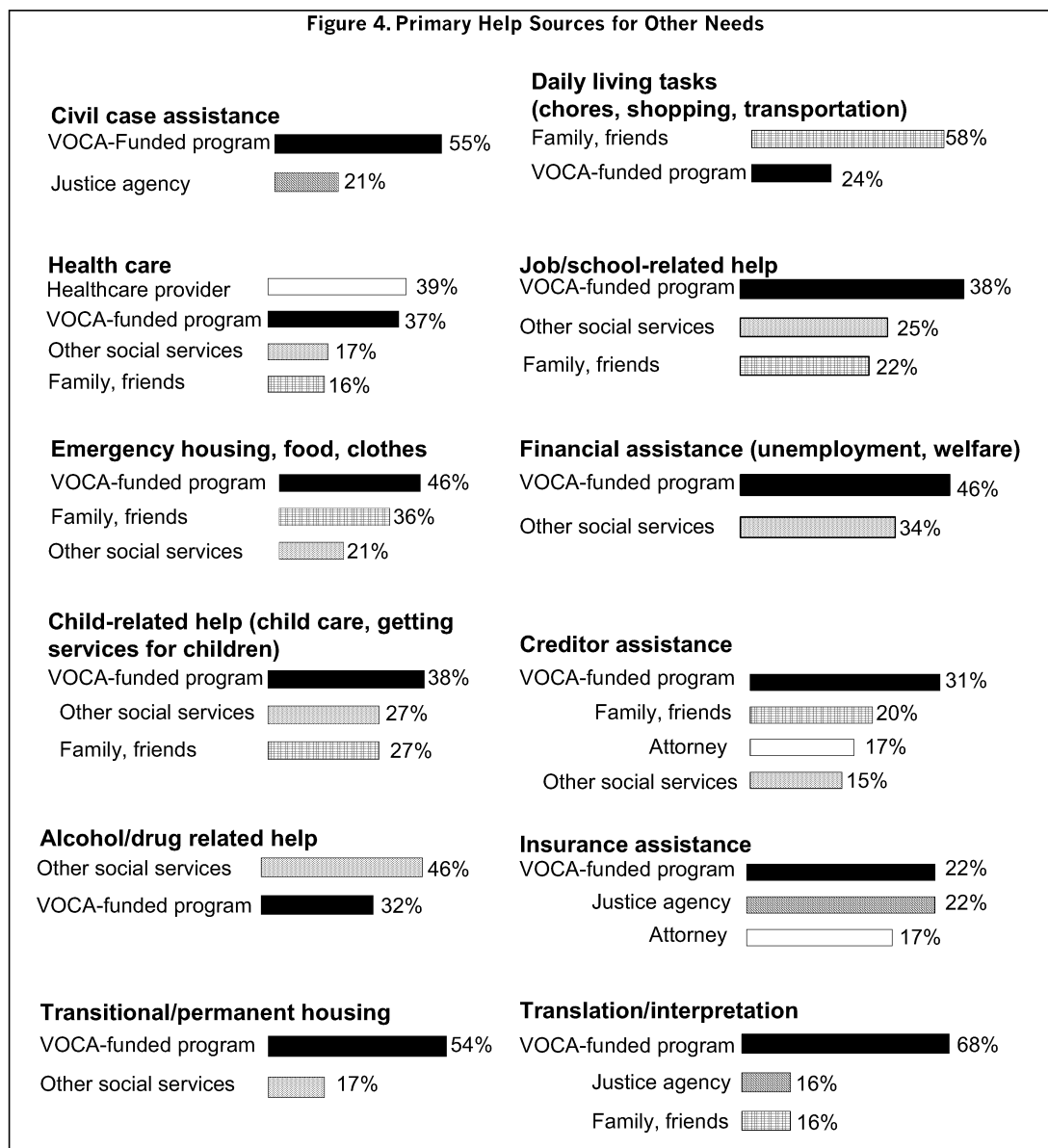


Other service needs were reported by fewer than 25 percent of the total sample; they include:

- Civil case assistance 23 percent
- Daily living tasks 21 percent
- Health care 18 percent
- Job/school-related help 16 percent
- Emergency housing, food, clothes 15 percent
- Financial assistance (e.g., unemployment) 15 percent
- Child-related help 14 percent
- Creditor assistance 14 percent
- Alcohol/drug-related help 11 percent
- Insurance assistance 10 percent
- Transitional/permanent housing 9 percent
- Translation/interpretation 4 percent⁸⁸

⁸⁸ We had the capacity to conduct the survey in Spanish as well as English, but no other languages. If we had been able to include speakers of other languages, we probably would have found a greater need for this service

The VOCA-funded program was a very common help source for these less frequently reported needs as well. Again, we see a pattern in which victims turn to multiple sources of help to address a crime-related need. See Figure 4 for the help sources reported by at least 15 percent of the victims who reported each of these types of needs.



For the 560 clients who reported a need for at least one type of service because of the crime, 88 (16 percent) did not have any of their needs met by the VOCA-funded program. At the other extreme, 26 percent of these respondents had all their needs addressed by the VOCA-funded program. The VOCA-funded program served about 60 percent of respondents' needs on average, which is an average of about two to three different types of needs per client (since the average number of needs was four).

Unmet Needs

Most clients had all their needs addressed by a help source, whether it was the VOCA-funded program, another formal help source, or informal sources such as family or friends. However, 15 percent of the survey participants had one or more needs (typically one or two) for which they did not receive any help from any source. For these 90 survey participants, the most common type of unmet need was criminal justice system advocacy or information, at 17 percent of the victims with unmet needs. In addition, 15 percent of these respondents needed financial or creditor assistance that they did not receive, and nine percent needed an assessment of their service needs and referrals.⁸⁹

Summary and Implications

In summary, we found that survey participants reported many different types of needs (averaging four different types of needs per client), with a core group of six needs emerging most commonly. Of these six, three center around psychological recovery from the crime. The VOCA-funded program was the most common help source for most of these needs, although other sources were used very frequently as well. This pattern highlights the importance of coordination of service providers – within the victim service community as well as reaching across boundaries to other types of service providers – since victims will often be involved with multiple agencies. VOCA-funded programs served about 60 percent of respondents' needs on average, and addressed all crime-related needs for over one-quarter of the sample, suggesting that program services are not always completely comprehensive but meet many needs of many victims. Only 15 percent of the victims reported having any unmet needs. These needs were most commonly for criminal justice advocacy/information, financial or creditor assistance, and service needs assessments/referrals. These may be useful directions for the development and implementation of victim services in the future.

What Factors Are Related to Clients' Needs and Use of Help Sources?

We have already seen that victims typically needed several different types of help in the aftermath of a crime, and that assistance with psychological recovery loomed large among a lengthy list of services victims needed. We also saw that victims often turned to various sources of help, with the VOCA-funded service provider a major help source for nearly every type of need. Some victims reported unmet needs, most often for criminal justice advocacy/information, financial or creditor assistance, and service needs assessments/referrals. More in-depth analyses of the survey data allowed us to address questions around who was most likely to need more types of help, who was most likely to have their needs addressed more fully by the VOCA-funded program, and who was most likely to have unmet needs. These findings suggest useful directions for policy and program developments to enhance client service by providers.

⁸⁹ The others had a variety of needs scattered across many categories, with no more than a handful per category.

Who Has More Needs of Different Types?

We can gauge how wide-ranging victims' needs are by adding up the number of different types of service needs they reported. The sum score ranges between zero and 18, with most clients' scores around four. Note that this does not measure who has the most pressing or serious needs, since it does not consider intensity or severity of needs, and all needs are weighted equally. Multivariate analyses⁹⁰ showed that clients with needs for more services of different types were more likely to:

- Be served by a private non-profit program⁹¹ to which they gave consent for the survey contact⁹²
- Be victims of sexual assault, drunk driving crashes, or domestic violence (relative to the other types of crime included in the sample)⁹³
- Have faced a weapon during the crime⁹⁴
- Have received services from the program for a lengthy period of time⁹⁵

Other variables were tested for an association with number of service needs, but the relationship was not significant (in either multivariate or bivariate analyses):

- Respondents' age, sex, race, education level, and status as primary vs. secondary victim
- Whether the victim knew the offender
- Whether the crime occurred at the victim's workplace
- How soon after the crime the clients learned of the VOCA-funded program, how soon they began receiving services, length of the service relationship, and reasons for termination of services

These findings suggest that, regardless of other tested factors, programs who serve victims of crimes committed with a weapon (usually a gun) need to be prepared to offer a variety of services or refer victims to other service providers, and will often serve their clients for an extended period of time. Programs that serve victims of certain crimes, primarily sexual assault, drunk driving crashes, and domestic violence, also need to respond to a variety of service needs. The findings for type of program and consent procedures may be due to the confound between these variables and type of crime. Or it is possible that clients of private non-profits report a

⁹⁰ The regression model was significant at $F(8, 478)=18.9, p<.001$, with an $R^2=.24$.

⁹¹ $b=3.4, t=5.8, p<.001$.

⁹² $b=2.0, t=3.8, p<.001$.

⁹³ $b=.31, t=3.7, p<.001$.

⁹⁴ $b=1.3, t=4.7, p<.001$.

⁹⁵ $b=.26, t=34.0, p<.003$.

wider range of needs because these programs offer more services to help identify and address needs,⁹⁶ so they are more cognizant of their needs.

Who Gets More Needs Addressed by the VOCA-Funded Programs?

We used the percent of victims' needs that were met by VOCA-funded programs as a measure of service comprehensiveness, rather than the simple number of needs the program addressed, because the types and numbers of needs respondents reported varied widely. Multivariate analyses⁹⁷ found that participants whose needs were addressed more comprehensively by the VOCA-funded program were more likely to:

- Have been served by a private non-profit program⁹⁸ and given consent to the survey contact⁹⁹
- Have had a lengthier service relationship with the VOCA-funded program¹⁰⁰

Bivariate analyses¹⁰¹ also found that clients whose needs were served more comprehensively by the VOCA-funded program were less likely to stop receiving services for any other reason than that services were no longer needed. This variable was not included in multivariate analyses because it was applicable to less than half the cases, so its inclusion would have significantly reduced the number of cases available for multivariate analyses.

Other factors were tested for an association with service comprehensiveness, but no statistically significant relationship was found:

- Type of crime
- Offender's use of a weapon during the crime
- Whether the victim knew the offender
- Whether the crime occurred at the victim's workplace
- How soon after the crime the victim learned of the VOCA-funded program, and how soon the victim began receiving services
- Client's race, sex, age, educational level, and status as the primary or secondary victim

These findings indicate that clients of private non-profits are more likely to have more of their needs met by the VOCA-funded program, and that those who are served more comprehensively are likely to be served for a longer period of time and are likely to stop receiving services because the services are no longer needed (rather than for other reasons). It is

⁹⁶ Chi-square analyses found that clients of non-profits were more likely to report needing needs assessment and service planning ($\chi^2(1)=39.0$, $p<.001$). For those who needed this service, clients of non-profits were more likely to report receiving the service from the VOCA-funded program ($\chi^2(1)=11.2$, $p<.001$).

⁹⁷ The regression model was significant at $F(6,457)=10.1$, $p<.001$, with an $R^2=.12$

⁹⁸ $b=.14$, $t=2.0$, $p<.05$.

⁹⁹ $b=.30$, $t=4.7$, $p<.001$

¹⁰⁰ $b=.04$, $t=3.7$, $p<.001$.

¹⁰¹ $t(174)=3.0$, $p<.004$.

not surprising that non-profits offer more comprehensive services, since programs based in justice agencies may be constrained by mission and resources to focus their services on certain needs, such as justice information and advocacy needs. Nor is it surprising that service comprehensiveness is related to length of services -- it's not hard to see that it may take more time to deliver more services – and to reasons for termination – those who have received more comprehensive services are less likely to still need services when they stop working with the VOCA-funded program.

Who Has Unmet Needs?

While only 15 percent of the sample reported any unmet needs (needs not met by any help source, including but not limited to the VOCA-funded program), we felt it would be instructive to try to identify these clients' characteristics. Clients with any unmet needs, relative to those with no unmet needs, were more likely to:

- Be members of racial/ethnic minority groups¹⁰²
- Terminate the service relationship with the VOCA-funded program for reasons other than no longer needing services¹⁰³

Other factors tested but not found to be related to unmet needs were:

- Service by non-profit vs. public-based VOCA-funded program
- Type of crime
- Participants' sex, age, educational level, and status as primary or secondary victim
- Whether the offender used a weapon
- Whether the crime occurred at the victim's workplace
- Whether the victim knew the offender

The primary implication of these findings is that service programs may wish to concentrate efforts on identifying why and how racial/ethnic minority victims' needs are not met so they can develop initiatives to fill this gap. It is not surprising that those with unmet needs had terminated services from the VOCA-funded program for a variety of reasons, including several reasons that indicate the services were not effective for the victim. See question 7 in the survey appendix for a detailed list of these reasons.

Summary and Implications

Our analyses of factors associated with clients' service needs, the comprehensiveness of VOCA-funded services, and unmet needs indicate that many victims, especially victims of sexual assault, drunk driving crashes, and domestic violence, and victims who have faced a weapon during the crime, tend to have a variety of needs. Non-profit programs are more successful at meeting the range of needs, especially when they can provide a variety of services,

¹⁰² $\chi^2(1)=4.2, p<.04$.

and when they can engage clients in the service relationship for an extended period of time. Victims who are members of racial/ethnic minority groups tend to have more needs that are unmet by any source (including but not limited to the VOCA-funded program). These victims are also more likely to end the service relationship with the VOCA-funded program for reasons other than no longer needing services, including problems around the service experience.

Helping a victim identify the range of service needs resulting from the crime, and either providing services to meet those needs or referring the clients to other community service programs, is clearly important. This may require program development and enhanced community coordination for some agencies. Identifying reasons minority victims have unmet needs and ways they can be better served seems to be a clear priority. It is also critical to engage the client in the service process for an extended period, to better meet his or her needs. Programs may need additional resources to be able to work with more clients for a longer period of time.

Clients' Ratings of Services from VOCA-Funded Programs

We asked participants to provide us with their ratings of the VOCA-funded program on a number of dimensions, including:

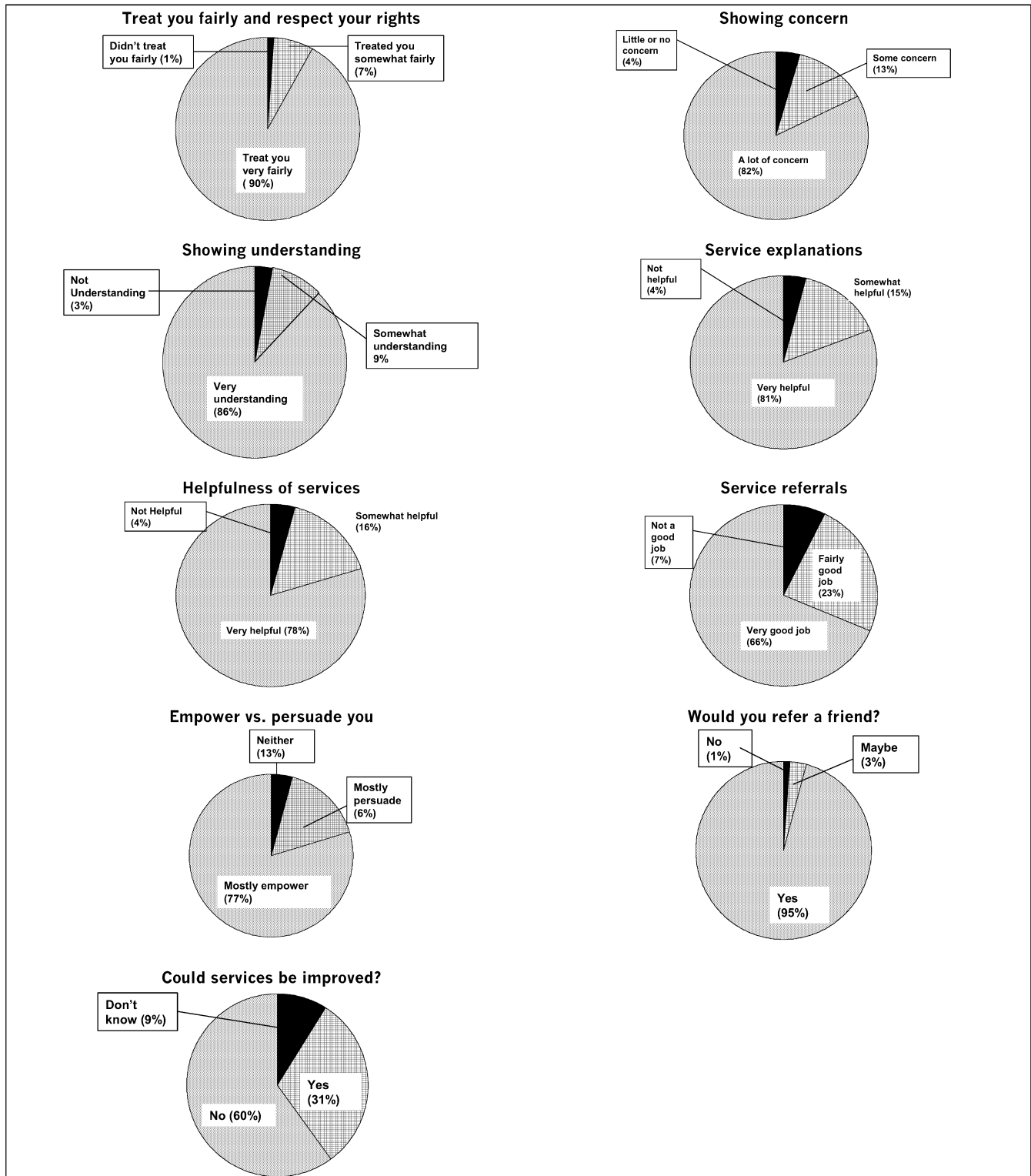
- Explanation of services
- Service referrals
- Understanding of the victimization experience
- Showing concern
- Fair treatment, respecting victims' rights
- Directiveness: empowerment vs. persuasion¹⁰⁴
- Helpfulness of services
- Willingness to refer a friend to the program
- Improvements needed to program's services

Figure 5 shows that on the whole, clients of these programs had very positive perceptions of the programs and their services. Three-quarters or more gave their program the highest rating on willingness to refer a friend, fair treatment and respecting victims' rights, showing understanding, showing concern, providing service explanations, helpfulness of services, and helping the victim with what he or she wanted to do about the crime rather than persuading the victim to do what the program wanted him or her to do (empowerment vs. persuasion).

¹⁰³ $\chi^2(1)=28.1, p<.001$.

¹⁰⁴ This item was omitted from the scale discussed in the summary paragraph because its scoring was not consistent with the scoring used for the other items.

Figure 5. Ratings of VOCA-Funded Program



The only area in which programs' ratings fell below these uniformly high levels was on providing referrals to services not provided by the program itself. Two-thirds of the clients said their program did a "very good job" at this; nearly one-quarter rated it a "fairly good job;" and less than ten percent said their program did not do a good job at providing referrals. While these are certainly not bad ratings on the whole, they do suggest directions for future program planning and development. Coordination, or at least communication, among service providers within communities may be the key to enhancing referrals, so that providers are more familiar with other resources available to victims and feel comfortable making these referrals. The development or enhancement of service programs could also improve referral practices, since some programs may not have made referrals because there are no high-quality service options in their community.

Nearly one-third of the sample felt the VOCA-funded programs' services could be improved. For these clients, ten percent or more cited the following needs:

- *Improve information:* more publicity about the program, better information on program services, better needs assessments/referrals by the program
- *Improve infrastructure:* more staff, more volunteers, less turnover, more staff training, more funding and other resources
- *Improve client contact:* more crisis intervention, outreach, personal contact, follow-up contact

A few clients also suggested improving programs' professionalism, criminal justice system advocacy/information, counseling services offered, and taking a more comprehensive service approach.

Summary and Implications

On the whole, clients of VOCA-funded programs had very positive perceptions of the programs and their services. We used eight survey items that provided ratings of different aspects of the clients' experiences with the programs to form an overall rating scale.¹⁰⁵ The scale was computed so that scores could range from 8 to 24, and there were some scores at each of these extremes. However, the average score was 22 and the median score was 23 (meaning half the scores fell below 23 and half fell at or above 23). Fewer than ten percent of the scale scores fell below the scale's hypothetical midpoint of 16. This is strong evidence that the great majority of clients were very satisfied with the VOCA-funded program and the services they received. A significant minority (about one-third) of clients did, however, offer suggestions for improvements. The major types of improvements needed were in the provision of information (including service referrals), support for the program's infrastructure, and client contact. Efforts to improve coordination among service providers within a community, and to support program development and enhancement, could be very beneficial to clients.

¹⁰⁵ This scale has a Cronbach's alpha of .84, showing strong internal consistency among the component items. In other words, this is a cohesive scale that measures a single construct.

Who Is More Satisfied with VOCA-Funded Service Programs?

Clients' perceptions of the VOCA-funded program that served them were a central focus of this survey. Eight survey items were combined into a scale with total scores ranging from 8 to 24. Survey participants' scores on this scale were uniformly very high, with a mean value of 22 and a median score of 23. While there is not much variance on these scale scores for statistical analyses to explain, we still thought it worthwhile to explore the factors related to client satisfaction.

Multivariate analyses¹⁰⁶ found that clients with higher scores on the satisfaction scale were more likely to:

- Have received services for a longer period of time¹⁰⁷
- Have no unmet needs¹⁰⁸
- Be in the older age groups, especially aged 60 and over¹⁰⁹

Several factors found significant in bivariate analyses were not included in multivariate analyses because they would have drastically reduced the number of cases available for those analyses. These bivariate analyses found that of those who had contacts with justice agencies, increased satisfaction with the VOCA-funded program was related to increased satisfaction with law enforcement agencies,¹¹⁰ the prosecutor's office,¹¹¹ the judge or magistrate,¹¹² their own role in the case,¹¹³ and the case outcome.¹¹⁴ In addition, bivariate analyses found that of those who had stopped receiving services from the VOCA-funded program, increased satisfaction was related to having stopped receiving services because they were no longer needed (versus any other reason).¹¹⁵

However, the following factors were not statistically related to satisfaction:

- Administrative type of program (private non-profit vs. public-based) and use of consent contact procedures
- Type of crime
- Clients' sex, race, educational level, or status as primary vs. secondary victim
- Offenders' use of a weapon
- Whether the crime occurred in the workplace

¹⁰⁶ The regression analysis was significant at $F(10,468)=11.2$, $P<.001$, with an $R^2=.19$.

¹⁰⁷ $b=.30$, $t=3.3$, $p<.001$.

¹⁰⁸ $b=2.2$, $t=6.6$, $p<.001$.

¹⁰⁹ $b=.47$, $t=3.2$, $p<.002$.

¹¹⁰ $F(2,481)=3.0$, $p<.06$.

¹¹¹ $F(2,327)=11.4$, $p<.001$.

¹¹² $F(2,292)=14.2$, $p<.001$.

¹¹³ $F(2,301)=12.5$, $p<.001$.

¹¹⁴ $F(2,259)=11.1$, $p<.001$.

¹¹⁵ $t(28.3)=3.5$, $p<.002$.

- Whether the victim knew the offender
- How soon after the crime the client learned of the VOCA-funded program or began receiving services
- Whether the client was still getting services from the VOCA-funded program
- The number of service needs, the number of needs addressed by the VOCA-funded program, and the comprehensiveness of those services
- The amount of out-of-pocket financial expenses the victim incurred because of the crime

These findings suggest that, regardless of a host of other factors, older clients who maintain a lengthier service relationship with the program, and who have their needs met by some source (if not the VOCA-funded program), are more pleased with their service experience. This again underscores the importance of identifying clients' needs and helping them get services for those needs the program can't address directly. In addition, it seems likely that ex-clients who are more satisfied ended the service relationship because their needs were met, rather than for other reasons. As suggested by our focus group experiences, clients are more satisfied with the VOCA-funded program when they are also more satisfied with their experiences with justice system agencies. This survey does not permit any causal inferences around this relationship – whether clients are satisfied with the VOCA-funded program because they liked the way the criminal case was handled, or vice versa.

Program Directiveness

One item was included in our program ratings but was not used in forming the satisfaction scale, because its scoring was different from that of the other items. This item measured whether the program's approach to victims was "empowering" or "persuasive." The exact wording of this item and its response options was:

Did the program try to help you with what you wanted to do about the crime, or did they try to persuade you to do what they thought you should do? Did they . . .

- mostly try to help you with what you wanted to do
- mostly try to persuade you to do what they thought you should do
- neither of the above

This item was included because there is some controversy around whether an agency's administrative location (private non-profit vs. public-based) influences its approach to victims. This survey found that few clients saw the VOCA-funded program that served them as persuasive rather than empowering. Seventy-seven percent reported that their program was primarily empowering, six percent saw it as primarily persuasive, and 13 percent saw it as neither one nor the other (likely a mixture of both).

Further analyses examined differences between clients who reported their program as primarily empowering and those who saw their program as primarily directive, omitting those who reported no clear opinion, in order to obtain the strongest contrast on program directiveness.¹¹⁶ We compared these two groups on administrative location of the program, comprehensiveness of services received from the program, and clients' overall satisfaction with the service experience.

Statistical analyses found that 95 percent of the clients of private-nonprofits saw the VOCA-funded program as primarily empowering, whereas 88 percent of the clients of public-based programs saw their program as mainly empowering. However, while these differences were statistically significant,¹¹⁷ it should be noted that the large majority of clients – including clients of public-based programs -- still reported the program as mostly empowering rather than mostly directive.

Additional analyses found that clients who saw their program as primarily empowering rather than persuasive were more satisfied with the service experience,¹¹⁸ and reported more comprehensive services (the program's services met more of their needs).¹¹⁹

Summary and Implications

The large majority of clients who participated in our survey were very pleased with the services they received from the VOCA-funded program. Levels of satisfaction increased with client age, length of the service relationship, and having all needs met by some help source, if not by the VOCA-funded program itself. Increased efforts may be needed to better serve younger clients, and increased resources may be needed to serve victims more comprehensively or make referrals for needed service (indicating, again, community coordination efforts). Additional resources could also be very useful for sustaining the heavier caseload that results from serving more clients for a longer period of time. Most clients saw their program's approach as "empowering" rather than "persuasive," particularly clients of private non-profits (although the majority of public-based programs' clients also saw their program as primarily "empowering"). Clients who feel empowered are more satisfied with the service experience and are more likely to have more of their needs met by the VOCA-funded service program, indicating that empowerment strategies are a very effective approach to working with victims.

Clients' Service History with VOCA-Funded Programs

We wanted to understand how and when clients became aware of the VOCA-funded programs, how quickly they began receiving services, the length of the service relationship, and reasons for ending the service relationship. This information can provide important insights for

¹¹⁶ And because there may be different interpretations of exactly what "neither of the above" means.

¹¹⁷ $\chi^2(1)=5.8, p<.02$.

¹¹⁸ $t(33)=5.6, p<.001$.

¹¹⁹ $t(465)=3.8, p<.001$.

future outreach efforts, and can help explain clients' perceptions of the programs and services they received.

Most clients learned about the VOCA-funded program pretty quickly after the crime. Nearly one-third knew about the program even before the crime was committed – which indicates good community outreach – and another third found out about the program within a week of the crime. In all, the large majority – over 80 percent – of clients were referred to the program within a month of the crime.

Clients found out about VOCA-funded programs through many routes. The most common path was outreach from the program itself – 29 percent of clients reported receiving direct contacts (by phone call, letter, or visit) and 12 percent learned about the program from its advertisements. This indicates, again, strong outreach efforts by programs. Twenty percent of the clients were referred by family, friends, and other personal resources. A comparable number were referred by law enforcement agencies. Fewer clients learned of the VOCA-funded program through other means, such as other justice system agencies (prosecutors, courts, and corrections); other social service programs; healthcare providers or funeral homes; or the state's victim compensation program.

A little under 20 percent of the survey participants began receiving services from the VOCA-funded program immediately (within a day or two of the crime). Another one-quarter began working with the program within a week of the crime, and over one-quarter began receiving services within a month of the crime. This suggests that programs were well-positioned to offer many services needed by victims right away, and some clients could have received crisis intervention in the immediate aftermath of the crime.

The service relationship tended to be lengthy for our survey respondents. At the time of our survey contact, one-quarter of the sample had worked with the programs for less than a month; one-third of the sample had worked with the programs for a period between one and six months; and over one-third had worked with the program for six months or more.

Only 37 percent of our sample reported that they had stopped working with the VOCA-funded program altogether (one-third considered themselves still in the service relationship, and over one-quarter said they had stopped getting services for the present but expected to receive services again in the future). The large majority of those respondents – 85 percent – had stopped receiving services because services were no longer needed or useful to them. A large number of other reasons were reported by other respondents who had stopped working with the program, with no single reason emerging as predominant. These reasons included: the services weren't helpful; the kind of help the victim needed wasn't provided; the victim moved away from the service area; inconvenient service location; problems dealing with the staff at the VOCA-funded program; lack of time for receiving services, and a number of other reasons reported by a very small number of clients.

Summary and Implications

Clients generally learned about the VOCA-funded programs relatively quickly after the crime. Clients reported a number of different referral sources, with the most common being direct outreach from the program itself, as well as program advertisements to the general public. A fair number of clients also learned about the program from law enforcement agencies, but fewer were informed by other justice agencies, community service providers, or victim compensation programs. These findings suggest that while outreach by programs is pretty strong, referrals from justice and other community agencies could be enhanced. Training and the provision of resource materials (such as referral cards) by VOCA-funded programs could enhance referrals by other community agencies. Clients generally started receiving services fairly soon after the crime, so that programs were well-positioned to provide a number of needed services. Clients tended to work with programs for a fairly long period of time, often six months or more. For those who had stopped receiving services, the most common reason by far was that the services were no longer needed. These factors indicate that clients in our survey sample had significant, substantive service experiences with the VOCA-funded programs.

Ratings of Criminal Justice Agencies' Services

We took the opportunity afforded by this survey to question victims about the services they received from various justice agencies, for comparison purposes and to see whether experiences with the justice system influenced perceptions of the VOCA-funded service programs (as anecdotal evidence from focus groups suggested). Because the survey needed to be brief, and this was not the primary focus of our work, we asked only a few very general questions about their experiences with law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, their role in the criminal case, and the case outcome.

The police took a report for the crime for 84 percent of the survey respondents. Slightly over half (53 percent) of these respondents were “very satisfied” with the way the police handled the case; 26 percent were “somewhat satisfied;” and 20 percent were “not satisfied.”

The prosecutor had a case on the crime for 60 percent of the survey participants. Of those cases, 53 percent were “very satisfied” with the way the prosecutor handled the case; 23 percent were “somewhat satisfied;” and 18 percent were “not satisfied.”

A judge or magistrate was involved in the case for just over half (54 percent) of the survey sample. About half (49 percent) were “very satisfied” with how the judge or magistrate handled the case; 24 percent were “somewhat satisfied;” and 18 percent were “not satisfied.”

We also asked respondents how satisfied they were with their role in the criminal court case, including elements such as telling their side of the story, providing evidence, getting information on case events and progress, and getting the chance to give their opinion on what should be done in the case. This question was applicable for just over half (54 percent) of the sample. Slightly

over half (53 percent) of these victims were “very satisfied” with their role; 21 percent were “somewhat satisfied;” and 19 percent were “not satisfied.”

Finally, for those who knew that their offender was convicted and knew what the sentence was (40 percent of the total sample), 45 percent were “very satisfied” with the conviction and sentencing; 24 percent were “somewhat satisfied;” and 26 percent were “not satisfied.”

Nearly a quarter (23 percent) of the total sample provided information as to what aspects of the case outcome were not satisfying to them (those who said they were “somewhat” or “not” satisfied with the conviction and sentencing). Half of these answers involved wanting more severe punishment for the offender. Another 29 percent of the respondents wanted other offender-related outcomes (including restitution, offender treatment, for the offender to admit guilt, for parents to be held responsible for their children’s crimes), or were unhappy with system-related factors (e.g., some victims felt they would not have been victimized if the system had not failed to prevent contact with the offender by failing to enforce plea agreement, probation, or incarceration conditions; others reported cultural misunderstandings with the authorities; and others reported case processing problems such as slow case processing, unrecouped financial losses, interventions that did not address victims’ needs; and botched case handling). In addition, 13 percent of those who reported sources of dissatisfaction felt that one or more offenders “got off” unfairly, or that charging patterns should be stronger or different. Finally, 10 percent of the respondents said their status, rights, needs, or input as victims were ignored.

Summary and Implications

Our survey respondents reported a very consistent pattern of experiences with justice system agencies. While not all victims were involved with all agencies (law enforcement, prosecution, and the courts), for those who were involved with each, about half rated the agency’s handling of the case, their own role in the case, and their satisfaction with case outcomes very highly (said they were “very satisfied”). Another quarter said they were “somewhat satisfied” with agencies’ case handling, their own role, and case outcomes. About one-fifth were “not satisfied” in their experiences with the justice system agencies. Sources of dissatisfaction with case outcomes were primarily insufficiently severe charges or punishment for the offender, unhappiness that one or more offenders were not held accountable, or a desire for offenders to pay restitution, admit guilt, or receive therapy. Other victims reported problems with how agencies handled the case (centering around failure to protect victims, cultural misunderstandings, system inefficiencies, and failure to respond to victims’ needs). Some victims also reported that their rights, needs, or input as victims were ignored.

While these respondents rated their interactions with justice system agencies much less favorably than they rated their interactions with the VOCA-funded program, it is encouraging that these ratings are as high as they are – half the victims were “very satisfied” across the board. It is worth noting again that this sample consists only of clients of VOCA-funded programs, and

that crime victims who do not access victim service providers may have very different perceptions of the justice system.

Who Is More Satisfied with the Justice System?

Although not the primary focus of this evaluation, we inquired about survey participants' satisfaction with justice agencies. We found a strikingly consistent pattern in which about half the respondents were very satisfied with various components of the justice system (i.e., the police, prosecution, judge, their own role in the case, and the case outcome); about one-quarter were moderately satisfied, and one in five were not satisfied. While these are not poor ratings, they are not as high as the ratings given the VOCA-funded service programs. The following discussion takes a closer look at what factors are related to satisfaction with the justice system, and relates these findings to service experiences.

Across the board, the variable most strongly related to experiences with the justice system – law enforcement,¹²⁰ prosecution,¹²¹ the judiciary,¹²² the victim's role in the criminal case,¹²³ and case outcomes¹²⁴ – was whether the client had any unmet service needs. Since the most common unmet need was criminal justice advocacy/information, and since the most frequent focus of dissatisfaction with the justice system was inadequate punishment for offenders, this pattern of findings strongly suggests that clients' unmet needs centered around strengthening the justice system's response to the offender, and that this decreased their satisfaction with the VOCA-funded program as well.

Another factor strongly related to most aspects of the justice experience was whether the survey respondent was served by a private non-profit or a public-based VOCA-funded service provider. Clients of public-based programs were more satisfied with their experiences with the police,¹²⁵ the prosecution,¹²⁶ their own role in the case,¹²⁷ and the case outcome.¹²⁸ These findings are in line with the argument that publicly-based victim service programs have the advantage of providing their clients with an entrée into the justice system and may be more influential in influencing system outcomes.

Type of crime was also related to satisfaction with the justice system. Victims of drunk driving crashes were least satisfied with law enforcement agencies and victims of robbery were most satisfied with the police.¹²⁹ For prosecution, victims of child abuse were least satisfied and

¹²⁰ $\chi^2(2)=8.5, p<.02.$

¹²¹ $\chi^2(2)=9.0, p<.02.$

¹²² $\chi^2(2)=16.8, p<.001.$

¹²³ $\chi^2(2)=10.7, p<.005.$

¹²⁴ $\chi^2(2)=8.8, p<.02.$

¹²⁵ $\chi^2(2)=17.7, p<.001.$

¹²⁶ $\chi^2(2)=6.6, p<.04.$

¹²⁷ $\chi^2(2)=7.3, p<.03.$

¹²⁸ $\chi^2(2)=7.5, p<.03.$

¹²⁹ $\chi^2(12)=41.1, p<.001.$

victims of robbery were most satisfied.¹³⁰ Finally, victims of robbery were most satisfied with their own role in the criminal case, whereas victims of domestic violence and drunk driving crashes were least satisfied with their role.¹³¹ Clients' age was also associated with their satisfaction with the justice system: older clients were more satisfied with law enforcement,¹³² prosecution,¹³³ and their own role in the case.¹³⁴

Other factors were less systematically influential, but were significantly related to one of the components of the justice system response:

- Those who were more satisfied with law enforcement agencies were more likely to have gotten criminal justice advocacy/information from some source¹³⁵ and to be White¹³⁶
- Those who were more satisfied with the prosecution were more likely to be the primary victim of the crime¹³⁷ and not to have known the offender¹³⁸
- Those who were more satisfied with the judiciary were more likely to be men¹³⁹
- Those who were more satisfied with their own role in the criminal case were more likely to have seen their VOCA-funded service provider as “empowering” them¹⁴⁰

Summary and Implications

If VOCA-funded programs were successful in working with the justice system to strengthen its response to offenders, victims' satisfaction with both the justice system and the service programs would be likely to increase, and the most common focus of unmet needs and dissatisfaction with the justice system would be addressed. This may be particularly true for younger people, as older people were more satisfied with both the justice system and the VOCA-funded service program. Victims of robbery and clients of public-based programs were uniformly more satisfied with their justice system experiences, indicating that current policies and practices seem to work well for them. However, victims of child abuse, domestic violence, and drunk driving crashes were more likely to be dissatisfied with one or more components of the justice system experience. Both victim service programs and justice system agencies should examine more closely ways in which their policies and practices could be improved to better meet the needs of younger victims and victims of certain types of crime.

¹³⁰ $\chi^2(12)=27.4, p<.007.$

¹³¹ $\chi^2(12)=28.4, p<.005.$

¹³² $\chi^2(6)=38.3, p<.001.$

¹³³ $\chi^2(6)=13.2, p<.05.$

¹³⁴ $\chi^2(6)=17.2, p<.01.$

¹³⁵ $\chi^2(2)=7.3, p<.03.$

¹³⁶ $\chi^2(2)=9.7, p<.01.$

¹³⁷ $\chi^2(2)=7.9, p<.02.$

¹³⁸ $\chi^2(2)=9.1, p<.02.$

¹³⁹ $\chi^2(2)=6.4, p<.04.$

¹⁴⁰ $\chi^2(4)=16.9, p<.002.$

Clients' Experiences with Crime Victims' Compensation

The final topic covered in our survey was victims' compensation. Compensation is the subject of a separate chapter of this report, and a more detailed survey was conducted specifically on compensation. However, that survey included only victims' compensation claimants. It was therefore unable to address questions around who does *not* apply for compensation and why. We expected to include in this client survey a number of victims who may have been eligible for and in need of compensation, but did not apply, in this survey effort, so we included several questions about compensation here. These findings are provided to shed light on some questions about compensation left unanswered by the other survey. They also help assess the extent to which VOCA-funded programs are notifying victims of compensation, as specified in OVC guidelines.

Victims of violent crime with out-of-pocket expenses, after insurance claims, job benefits, and other collateral sources have made payments, may be eligible for compensation. Nearly two-thirds of our sample reported crime-related expenses, and over half (57 percent) reported out-of-pocket losses as a result of the crime. The median amount of out-of-pocket losses was about \$800, with estimates ranging from \$10 to \$700,000. The types of expenses these victims incurred were very often the same types of expenses commonly eligible for compensation, including medical/dental expenses, lost wages from missing work, counseling expenses, transportation expenses, moving costs, replacement services, and funeral/burial costs. However, victims also reported incurring other types of expenses not eligible for compensation, including property loss and attorneys' fees (for services not related to assistance with the compensation claim).

Somewhat under half (45 percent) of the sample had heard of victims' compensation. Those with expenses were more likely to be familiar with compensation than those without expenses ($X^2(1)=9.7, p<.003$), indicating that education is being provided where appropriate. Of people who were aware of compensation, by far the most frequent referral source was the VOCA-funded program (54 percent). Nearly all the respondents (89 percent) who were aware of compensation had learned of it within six months of the crime, which is within even the shortest filing deadlines.

Forty-one percent of those who had heard of compensation had applied for it, and those with expenses were more likely to apply than those without expenses ($X^2(1)=34.1, p<.002$). However, 55 percent of victims who were aware of compensation had not applied. The main reason that non-applicants did not apply was that they had no crime-related expenses (one-third of all non-applicants). Other reasons, each cited by less than 10 percent of non-applicants, included not placing a priority on payment of expenses in the wake of the crime; collateral payment sources for expenses; types of expenses that are not eligible for compensation; confusing compensation with restitution or misunderstanding compensation regulations; and a large number of other reasons cited by only a handful of non-applicants.

Summary and Implications

Our findings on compensation from this survey of victims served by VOCA-funded programs, including both compensation claimants and non-claimants, indicate that compensation policies and programs seem to serve victims well. With the exception of property loss and some attorneys' fees, the types of expenses victims reported incurring are generally the same types that are eligible for compensation. Victims who had expenses seemed to learn of compensation from VOCA-funded programs in a timely manner, and were more likely to apply for compensation. Non-applicants' reasons for not applying did not often indicate a gap in services, although the fact that a few potentially eligible victims did not apply for compensation because of misconceptions about the program suggests the need for better education about compensation by, and perhaps of, direct service providers. In addition, a few victims did not consider payment of expenses a priority in recovering from the crime. It seems likely that these victims may have been overwhelmed by other needs, and may have benefited from additional assistance with the compensation process so that they could concentrate on more pressing demands and still receive compensation.

Who Is More Likely to Access Victims Compensation?

The final set of questions revolves around the experiences of these survey respondents with victims' compensation. We saw from earlier analyses that compensation programs seem to serve victims' needs well, with some gaps as noted. The following analyses take a closer look at who applies for compensation and who does not.

Multivariate analyses¹⁴¹ found that respondents who were most likely to apply for compensation were:

- Victims of homicide or robbery, and not victims of child abuse or domestic violence¹⁴²
- Victims who had crime-related expenses¹⁴³
- Younger than 26 or older than 59¹⁴⁴

Other variables that were tested for an association with applying for compensation, but found to be non-significant, included:

- Whether the client was served by a public-based or private non-profit
- How soon after the crime the client learned of compensation
- The amount of out-of-pocket crime-related expenses
- Clients' race, sex, educational level, or status as the primary vs. secondary victim
- Whether the offender used a weapon

¹⁴¹ The regression model as significant at $F(8,179)=6.9$, $p<.001$, with an $R^2=.24$.

¹⁴² $b=.06$, $t=3.1$, $p<.003$

¹⁴³ $b=.33$, $t=4.1$, $p<.001$.

¹⁴⁴ $b=.09$, $t=2.0$, $p<.05$.

- Whether the crime occurred in the victim's workplace
- Whether the victim knew the offender

It makes sense that victims who had crime-related expenses were more likely to apply for compensation, although it would seem that those with more out-of-pocket losses would be more likely to apply. It is reassuring that compensation is likely to be accessed equally regardless of the type of service provider the victim worked with, most client demographics, and several characteristics of the crime. Perhaps victims in mid-adulthood were less likely to apply because they were more likely to be employed and so to have alternative sources of payment for crime-related expenses. It is less clear why victims of child abuse and domestic violence would be less likely to apply, particularly as compensation programs are making innovations to their policies and practices to serve these victims better (see the compensation report). Perhaps these innovations have not been sufficiently publicized to direct service providers and victims themselves.

Summary and Implications

This survey does not provide sufficient information to determine who was eligible to receive compensation, but we can assess factors associated with a greater likelihood of applying for compensation. These analyses did not indicate access barriers based on type of service program the client worked with, client demographics, or certain features of the crime. Victims with expenses were more likely to apply, as one would expect, and victims of homicide or robbery were more likely to apply. However, victims of child abuse or domestic violence were less likely to apply, despite the innovations many programs have made in recent years to serve these victims better. As emphasized in our report on compensation, this suggests that additional training and outreach efforts are needed to familiarize direct service providers and victims with the new policies and practices compensation programs are putting into place.

INTEGRATION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON VOCA VICTIM ASSISTANCE

OVC allocates VOCA assistance funds to state administrators, who may be housed in a variety of different types of state agencies, for distribution to community-level direct service providers. OVC issues guidelines governing the administration of funds at the state level and the use of funds by community subgrantees. As specified in 1997 guidelines, state programs must award at least ten percent of funds for domestic violence victims, ten percent for sexual assault victims, ten percent for child abuse victims, and ten percent for underserved populations, with the remainder at the administrators' discretion. State programs have four years to obligate federal allocations, and may use up to five percent for administrative activities and one percent for training activities (with the rest to be distributed to community-level agencies). OVC guidelines specify that VOCA funds awarded to community-level service providers can support public non-federal and private non-profit organizations that provide a 20 percent match and do not charge victims for services. VOCA funds can only be used to support direct services

(although this requirement may be relaxed with new guidelines currently under consideration), and providers must assist clients with compensation.

From 1986 to 2002, OVC distributed \$2.7 billion to state VOCA assistance programs. Annual allocations increased at a fairly steady level until 1995, but then increased steeply during 1996 and 1997, dropped significantly in 1998 and 1999, and increased again in 2000. The fluctuations which marked the years from 1996 to 1999 were caused by fluctuations in collections into the CVF and allocation formulas that provide all formula funds not needed to meet the compensation payout to the assistance programs. In response to these fluctuations, Congress began capping allocations in FY 2000, with remaining funds to be held in the CVF for allocation in future years. Since then allocations have stabilized, showing relatively modest increases from 2000 to 2001 and from 2001 to 2002. However, expected allocations for 2003 are expected to be seven percent less than 2002 allocations, because of the increase in the compensation payout formula and earmarks and set-asides for other uses, despite an excess of about \$638 million in unallocated collections (after expected 2003 allocations).

The Use of VOCA Assistance Funds

In 2002 the states received an average of \$6.8 million each, with a midpoint of \$4.8 million. Allocations are based on population so state-by-state figures vary considerably; the largest allocation was California's \$42.7 million. In 2001 over 5,400 awards were made with VOCA assistance funds, and over 3.5 million victims were served by VOCA-funded programs.

Use of the funds to serve victims of different types of crimes varies widely across states, but averages from 2001 data illustrate general patterns. Domestic violence victims are by far the most frequent recipient of VOCA-funded services. Across states, an average of just over half of all victims served were victims of domestic violence. Victims of adult sexual assault averaged about five percent of all victims served, and child abuse victims averaged about 15 percent. Assault victims represented five percent of victims, and homicide survivors were three percent. Drunk driving victims accounted for one percent of victims served, and robbery was two percent. Victims of other types of crime, such as elder abuse, adults molested as children, and other crimes, averaged 17 percent of all victims served across states.

Statistics from 2001 are also available to describe services provided. From half to 69 percent of victims received telephone information and referrals; in-person information and referrals; criminal justice system advocacy and support; and follow-up contacts. From 20 to 41 percent of victims received crisis counseling; other types of services; personal advocacy; and assistance in filing compensation claims. Fewer than 15 percent of victims received group treatment and support; shelter and safehouse; emergency legal advocacy; therapy; and emergency financial assistance.

Policy and Program Issues

In 1997 OVC held regional meetings of state VOCA assistance administrators to discuss critical issues in program administration and share innovative funding strategies and programs. These meetings were spurred by the enormous increase in allocations that year, and by new OVC guidelines allowing the four-year obligation period. The issues identified as critical included funding fluctuations and long-range planning; needs and service assessments; use of administrative funds; outreach to underserved victims; outreach to providers; coordination of federal funding streams and reporting requirements; use of advisory boards; implementing victims' rights legislation; training efforts; statewide toll-free numbers for victims; and use of technology. OVC's New Directions (1998) expanded on these issues with recommendations to develop services for special situations (such as mass crisis events) and special victims (such as the disabled). Other recommendations include assisting victims in interacting with the media, public awareness activities, development of program standards, staff training and certification, and program evaluation.

These earlier efforts helped to provide a framework from which we approached our task of describing and evaluating how well state grant administration and local service providers function to serve victims, and to offer recommendations for future developments. The following sections integrate the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from the various research activities we implemented – the national survey of all state VOCA assistance administrators in 1999; two rounds of site visits for in-depth analyses of assistance in six states through interviews with program administrators and staff, members of oversight bodies, advocacy groups, and direct service providers; focus groups with clients of VOCA assistance programs; and a survey of nearly 600 VOCA-funded program clients to get their perspectives. The presentation is organized around major themes of program policies and operations.

Funding Supports Valuable Services

Congressional caps on CVF allocations from 2000 to 2002 prevented the wide fluctuations seen in the previous four years and provided relatively moderate increases from year to year. However, expected allocations for 2003 will produce a seven percent decrease in VOCA funds available to assistance programs, the first drop since 1999. Many in the victim field find a cutback in funding to be unpalatable, given the approximately \$638 million in collected but unallocated funds in the CVF. With the uncertainty of the annual Congressional appropriations process, and wide variations in CVF collections from year to year (with a possible decrease in collections in the current year), state administrators are challenged to do long-range planning in this climate of instability. The four-year obligation period helps to relieve pressures on state administrators, but a greater measure of predictability would be very useful for long-range planning. Mechanisms for smoothing allocation fluctuations and reducing uncertainty as much as possible are needed.

It is critical that policies be developed for putting funds to work for victims in a timely way and in accordance with the legislative intent of VOCA. According to the clients we spoke with, VOCA funds services that meet many of their needs and are very valuable. Our survey of VOCA-funded program clients, drawing on a broad base of program types and victim characteristics, found that VOCA funds are supporting services that meet many victims' needs and are highly regarded by clients. The survey found that victims had an average of four different types of needs, and that, while many victims get help from other sources as well, the VOCA-funded program addressed 60 percent of their needs. Victims' satisfaction with services was assessed through a scale with possible scores ranging from eight to 24; the average score was 22. This indicates that many victims were very satisfied with the VOCA-funded services they received.

However, there are still gaps that could be addressed if additional funding were available. Fifteen percent of the victims in our survey had service needs that were not met by any source, including the VOCA-funded program, other formal services, and informal help sources. These needs were most often service needs assessments and referrals, assistance with the criminal justice system, and assistance with finances or creditors. Members of racial/ethnic minorities were more likely to have unmet needs. It may be useful to expand services to these victims and expand services related to needs assessments, referrals, the justice system, and financial matters, to meet victims' needs more completely. In addition, many state administrators and direct service providers felt there are large groups of victims who do not access services at all, and more efforts should be concentrated on reaching these victims. These may include members of racial/ethnic minorities as well as victims of certain types of crimes, disabled victims, rural victims, and gay/lesbian victims.

State Program Management

According to our 1999 survey, assistance administrators tend to make fairly full use of the five percent administrative allowance, with two-thirds of state programs reporting at least some use and the others reporting full use. These funds have supported staffing, training, subgrantee monitoring, and the purchase of office equipment, which may be described as "basic" administrative activities. More "advanced" activities, such as strategic planning, improved coordination, and automation, were less commonly reported. Many administrators expressed the need for greater support for administrative activities.

This survey of state administrators also found that only half had a formal strategic plan to identify priorities and future developments in subgrant funding. Continuation awards are the norm. While it was the original intent of VOCA legislation to provide core funding to stabilize services, and this is very important, it may be difficult to expand into new areas when funds are committed to current subgrantees to continue ongoing work. Administrators may also be reluctant to undertake new projects given the uncertainties of future funding availability. Since there is a considerable emphasis on continuation funding of current subgrantees, it is not

surprising that state administrators' outreach to potential subgrantees to publicize funding availability tended to emphasize current subgrantees (although there were exceptions, with some site visit states describing proactive efforts to recruit and assist new applicants).

Needs assessments can be useful to identify gaps in services and plan priorities. We found that most states use a specific process for identifying needs, usually informal processes such as consulting with those working in the field. Formal systematic methods are not without drawbacks, but can be more inclusive than methods that rely on people already working in the area. We found in site visits that needs assessments may be conducted at the local level by community-based groups, or in a more centralized fashion through a state-wide process.

States use various methods for making subgrant award decisions, and each procedure has its advantages and drawbacks. Some states concentrate the decision-making power in the administrative agency, others use a state-level multidisciplinary board, and others use a decentralized system with decision-making power effectively evolved to local-level bodies across the state. Each is subject to at least perceived political pressures. Service providers that belong to a strong network, such as domestic violence coalitions, are often thought to have the advantage in obtaining funding because of the strength and the connections of the coalition. There is no single model that works best in all circumstances, and any method of distributing funding will be subject to criticism because of the sensitive nature of this function.

As with needs assessment procedures, monitoring processes are largely informal and constrained to review of progress reports (unless problems are noted, then more active monitoring such as site visits may occur). Monitoring is very important to ensure that funds are put to best use, particularly in an atmosphere of largely continuation funding. Some states are stepping up monitoring procedures and many providers welcome these efforts. However, few proactive efforts by state administrators to monitor and enforce providers' compliance with requirements to assist victims with compensation were observed. As monitoring efforts are enhanced, this would be an important area to include.

One percent of the VOCA allocation can be used for training, with a 20 percent match (these restrictions may be expanded under pending new guidelines). Many state administrators access these funds to provide training to subgrantees, but some have not made use of them because state and other federal (such as STOP VAWA) funds are explicitly targeted for training activities. This suggests that the use of VOCA funds for training could be directed toward service providers who would not be eligible for training supported by other funds. For example, STOP VAWA funds focus on violence against women, so training of providers who serve victims other than domestic violence and sexual assault might be a priority for VOCA training funds.

An important resource for state administrators is their new professional association, the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators. The Association can be a very useful vehicle for exchanging information among administrators on these critical activities, so that

states can learn from each other's experiences and innovative ideas. While this association is too new to have been included as a focus of the evaluation, it seems to have the support of administrators and good resources to accomplish useful program development goals.

Issues for Direct Service Providers

Our site visit interviews with VOCA-funded providers focused on several important issues in service provision. Some of these issues revolve around program administrative activities – outreach, coordination, and reporting requirements – rather than direct service, so cannot be supported with VOCA funds under current OVC guidelines. Some providers have difficulty finding support for administrative activities, and would like to have an administrative allowance from their VOCA subgrants.

Many VOCA-funded program clients also turned to a variety of other sources to meet their crime-related needs, including a range of formal help sources (such as other victim service providers, other types of social service or healthcare providers, and criminal justice personnel) and informal sources (such as family and friends). Clearly, VOCA-funded victim service providers need to coordinate, and often do coordinate, with other providers in the community, to avoid gaps or duplication of services to shared clients. This coordination should reach across traditional boundaries of “victim service providers” and include those working in other fields as well, such as healthcare. Coordination activities can take various forms, such as cross-training, developing coordinated policies or procedures, developing referral procedures and resources (such as palm cards), or multidisciplinary task forces. Issues arising from conflicting missions and victim confidentiality are likely to arise and must be resolved for coordination efforts to move forward.

There is consensus that many types of victims (defined by both type of crime and victim characteristics) are underserved. Our survey found that, even among clients who had accessed VOCA-funded service programs, members of racial/ethnic minorities were more likely to have unmet needs. Our discussions with professionals in the field identified a number of underserved victim groups, along racial/ethnic lines as well as by type of crime and victim demographics and other characteristics, such as sexual orientation, disability, and residence in a rural area. Efforts to meet these needs may involve expanding current victim service programs, including developing new programs as well as new staffing patterns or training to respond appropriately to new victim populations. Another approach is to develop victim service programs within other types of organizations that currently work with underserved populations.

Staff often work under stressful conditions for low pay. The use of volunteers is problematic for some programs, because of the nature of the services provided, limits on volunteers' availability, and privacy/confidentiality concerns. Efforts to improve the pay scale, reduce disparities between various segments of the workforce, and recognize special contributions are helpful in improving quality of life and reducing staff burnout and turnover. It

would also be helpful to some programs if the requirement for using volunteers was relaxed to respond to particular concerns with the use of volunteers.

Coordination of reporting requirements across various funding sources (including the many federal funding streams) would help reduce programs' record-keeping requirements. Currently, each of many funding sources may have its own reporting requirements, and this requires programs to spend a good deal of time keeping the same data in many different ways. A multi-agency federal task force has explored ways to coordinate reporting requirements, but a unified form has not yet been made available.

Survey participants were less satisfied with their experiences with the criminal justice system than they were with VOCA-funded program services, although their levels of satisfaction were still fairly high on the whole. Efforts by victim service programs to strengthen the justice system's response to offenders, primarily in the form of more severe punishment, would fulfill a major unmet service need of many victims and address the primary source of victims' dissatisfaction with the justice system. These efforts may take the form of system advocacy, in which advocates work to strengthen sentencing laws across the board. Or they may do case advocacy by working with prosecutors to represent the victim's experiences and input in an effective way that the court will heed (such as victim impact statements). Victims who were served by public-based programs were more satisfied with the justice system experience than were victims served by nonprofits. This may indicate that public-based advocates are well-placed to assist victims in their needs related to the criminal case. Some victims also reported problems with how justice personnel handled the case, including failure to protect victims, cultural misunderstandings, system inefficiencies, and failure to respond to victims' rights, needs, or input.

Victims' rights are codified in legislation and state constitutional amendments, but implementation is often less than perfect. More training and resources to assist justice agency personnel in their efforts to provide victims' rights as specified by law are necessary, as are corrective mechanisms for cases in which victims are not provided their rights.

Recommendations for VOCA Assistance Program Development

State administrators and community-level subgrantees who provide direct services are clearly functioning well in a number of areas. This is commendable particularly in light of the difficult funding situation. Useful directions for future developments may include:

- *Make funds available for victim services.* VOCA funds support services that address many of victims' needs and are highly valued by clients. Given the service gaps that exist – many victims do not access services, and even some of those who do still have needs that are not met by any source – it seems crucial to make funds

available to support and expand these services. There is over \$600 million in collected but unallocated funds currently dedicated by law to victim service uses.

- *Balance the need to provide funding with the need to provide stability.* One approach to making funds available would be to disburse all collections from the CVF in lump sum allocations to states. However, given the instability of collections into the CVF from year to year, this would be unlikely to be a prudent long-term strategy. Instead, it may be a wiser course to develop provisions for drawing on the unallocated collections in years in which CVF collections are down, and replenishing these “cushion” funds when collections are high. Such a plan was included as part of the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001, but was deleted from FY 2002 Justice Department appropriations legislation. Since other allocations are made from the CVF and changes to these allocations (such as increases in the compensation payout formula and changes to earmarks and set-asides) can affect amounts available for VOCA assistance programs, the more directly such a plan addresses assistance allocations specifically, the more stability it will provide to these funds. It would also be very helpful to develop additional methods of funding victim assistance programs that do not rely on CVF collections, to increase support and provide more stability.

- *Support state administrators’ activities to enhance fund management.* We found that programs are generally well-run but that administrators could, and would like to, do much more if more support for these activities was available. More systematic needs assessments, development of strategic planning, enhanced coordination with other fund administrators, expanded training, more active monitoring of subgrantees, and development of automated systems could greatly enhance grant management and the delivery of services to victims. Since many states can and do make use of the federal administrative and training allowances, increases in these allowance could provide very valuable support. This may work best when overall allocations increase, so that reserving more funds for administrative and training activities would not contribute to a decrease in funds available for subgrant awards. State administrators have recently formed a professional association, the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators. This may be a very useful vehicle for exchanging information among state agencies so that states can learn from each other’s experiences and innovative ideas.

- *Support service providers’ administrative activities.* Pending guidelines that would allow subgrantees to use some of their VOCA awards to support essential administrative activities such as coordination and outreach would be very welcome to many providers. Our survey found that many clients of VOCA-funded programs work with other providers as well, so it is critical to coordinate services. We also found in the survey and site visits that many groups are unserved or underserved; outreach is essential for reaching these groups of victims. In some cases the development of new services or specialized training to meet specific needs of

newly-served victims may be important. Our survey found that VOCA program clients are more frequently referred to the VOCA program by some agencies (such as law enforcement) than by others (such as prosecutors' offices or healthcare providers). This may provide useful directions for where to target outreach and training efforts in the future, to reach new groups of victims.

- *Address operational challenges to direct service programs.* Staff burnout, due to demanding work conditions and low pay, is problematic for many programs (especially nonprofit programs, where pay scales may be lower than public-based programs). Some programs are able to use volunteers with great success, whereas others are reluctant to make extensive use of this resource because of the nature of the work, limits on volunteers' availability, and privacy and confidentiality concerns (particularly in rural or tribal areas). Another challenge is posed by unique reporting requirements imposed by many funders, which requires a great deal of record-keeping. These challenges could be addressed by enhancing staffing resources and pay scales, relaxing requirements around the use of volunteers where warranted, and promoting efforts to coordinate reporting requirements, at least across federal funders of victim services.

- *Develop direct services to fill unmet needs.* Our client surveys and interviews suggested several areas in which services should be expanded. Services for underserved groups of victims, such as racial/ethnic minorities and others, should be developed in culturally appropriate ways and efforts should be made to reach these victims and offer them services. Advocates should continue to focus on improving the justice system's responsiveness to victim concerns, including implementation and enforcement of victim rights, providing victims' input on appropriate criminal case outcomes, and improving the treatment of victims by the justice system. Finally, needs assessments, service referrals, and financial counseling should be enhanced to better meet victims' needs.

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Appendix A

Survey of Compensation Administrators

→ Instructions are in bold text preceded by an arrow (→).

52 Respondents

Length of interview:

Average = 56.2 Range = 21 – 82 [Time in minutes]

Introduction

This is part of a study sponsored by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and conducted by the Urban Institute. This is a national study about compensation benefits for victims of crime.

You should have received a letter of introduction from OVC and a copy of the questionnaire we'd like to complete with you, as well as a summary of descriptive information on your state's program, from the Urban Institute. Please review this summary prior to completing the survey.

First, we'd like to confirm:

Name: _____
Position: _____

How long at this position: _____

→ **If less than 1 year:** Were you in compensation services before?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

Management

1.

We sent you an information sheet about your VOCA Compensation Program. This information was compiled from OVC Performance Reports, the NACVCB's Program Directory, and Internet homepages for state programs. Is all the information accurate?

→ **Check one box that applies**

- 1. Yes → **Skip to Q2** 31% (16/52)
- 2. No → **Continue with 1A**

1A. What needs to be revised?

→ **Make revisions**

2.

Since fiscal year 1995, states have been allowed to use up to 5% of federal compensation grant funds for administrative purposes. According to OVC information on your state, you used

or will use:

- ____% in 1995 7% (4/52); Average = 2.5%
- ____% in 1996 96% (50/52); Average = 1.8%
- ____% in 1997 98% (51/52); Average = 2.3%
- ____% in 1998 100% (52/52); Average = 1.7%
- ____% in 1999 13% (7/52); Average = 3.6%

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. If ALWAYS used the full 5%, complete 2A and 2B 19% (10/52)
- 2. If used SOME funding, complete 2A, 2B, and 2C 39% (20/52)
- 3. If NEVER used any funds, complete 2C 42% (22/52)

2A. For what purposes have you ever used VOCA compensation funds? 58% (30/52)

→ Check all that apply

2B. For each of the ways in which you have used assistance funds for administration, how useful have these activities been to the administration of the program?

→ Rate each option according to the scale:

- 1 = not very useful
- 2 = moderately useful
- 3 = extremely useful

	Not very useful	Moderately useful	Extremely useful	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. pay salary and benefits for staff, or consultant fees, to administer and manage the financial or programmatic aspects of VOCA	1	2	3	
				57% (17/30) 94%
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. attend OVC-sponsored or other relevant technical assistance meetings	1	2	3	
				50% (15/30) 80%
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. purchase equipment for the state grantee, such as computers, software, fax machine, copying machines, etc.	1	2	3	
				50% (15/30) 100%

<input type="checkbox"/> 4. purchase memberships in crime victims' organizations and victim-related materials, such as curricula, literature, and protocols	1	2	3
33% (10/30)	30%	70%	
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. develop strategic plans on a state and/or regional basis, conduct surveys and needs assessments, or promote innovative approaches to serving crime victims (such as through technology)	1	2	3
13% (4/30)		75%	
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. improve coordination efforts on behalf of crime victims with other OJP offices and bureaus, or with federal, state, or local agencies and organizations	1	2	3
10% (3/30)	33%	67%	
<input type="checkbox"/> 7. provide training on compensation issues to public or private nonprofit organizations that assist crime victims	1	2	3
27% (8/30)		88%	
<input type="checkbox"/> 8. print and/or develop publications such as training manuals, victim service directories, or victims' brochures	1	2	3
37% (11/30)		82%	
<input type="checkbox"/> 9. coordinate or develop protocols, policies, or procedures that promote systemic change or coordination in the ways crime victims are treated or served	1	2	3
13% (4/30)	25%	25%	50%
<input type="checkbox"/> 10. develop an automated claims processing or tracking system	1	2	3
33% (10/30)		90%	
<input type="checkbox"/> 11. offer a toll-free number for potential claimants to obtain information or assistance	1	2	3
10% (3/30)	33%	67%	

<input type="checkbox"/> 12. obtain special equipment to facilitate services to persons with disabilities 3% (1/30)	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> 13. pay expert reviewers for medical or mental health claims 3% (1/30)	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> 14. pay audit costs 10% (3/30)	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> 15. pay for indirect costs at a federally approved indirect cost rate 10% (3/30)	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> 16. other: _____ _____ 10% (3/30)	1	2	3

2C. What are the reasons you have not made full use of the administrative allowance?

→ Check *all* that apply (42/52)

- 1. the funds are more urgently needed for awards to victims 52% (22/42)
- 2. administrative funding has been available from other sources 57% (24/42)
- 3. OVC documentation requirements present obstacles to using these funds for administrative purposes 12% (5/42)
- 4. other: _____ 29%
(12/42)

Other include:

- 1) Insufficient funds
- 2) Sufficient state funds

Training

3.

Has the compensation program provided training in the basics of victim compensation to groups and individuals that routinely come into contact with victims? (Training may have

been provided by your program or other organizations and is not limited to training funded by VOCA funds.)

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes → Complete 3A 92% (48/52)
- 2. No → Skip to Q4

3A. Which of the following individuals or groups did your program or other organizations provide training to in the last year?

→ Check all that apply

Criminal justice professionals

- 1. law enforcement 96% (46/48)
- 2. Prosecutors 71% (34/48)
- 3. Judges 31% (15/48)
- 4. probation/parole 56% (27/48)
- 5. Corrections 38% (18/48)
- 6. state criminal justice planning organization 25% (12/48)
- 7. other: _____ 17% (8/48)

Victim services professionals

- 8. state domestic violence coalition or local service providers 92% (44/48)
- 9. state sexual assault coalition or local service providers 83% (40/48)
- 10. federal victim/witness coordinators, including military 52% (25/48)
- 11. state or local police-based victim/witness staff 79% (38/48)
- 12. state or local prosecution-based victim/witness staff 90% (43/48)
- 13. MADD 52% (25/48)
- 14. survivors of homicide representatives 56% (27/48)
- 15. other grassroots victims' organizations 48% (23/48)
- 16. state or local protective service agencies, such as those serving child abuse victims, elder abuse victims, and vulnerable adults 54% (26/48)
- 17. other: _____ 2% (1/48)

Other allied professionals

- 18. health care providers 63% (30/48)

- 19. mental health care providers 52% (25/48)
- 20. Attorneys 27% (13/48)
- 21. Clergy 21% (10/48)
- 22. funeral directors 44% (21/48)
- 23. Indian tribal representatives 29% (14/48)
- 24. representatives of other ethnic and minority groups 27% (13/48)
- 25. other: _____ 10% (5/48)

Others

- 26. major employers 8% (4/48)
- 27. school personnel 29% (14/48)
- 28. victims or their survivors 44% (21/48)
- 29. other: _____ 8% (4/48)

4.

Are victimization issues (e.g., how to talk to victims, effects of victimization, symptoms of PTSD, services available for victims, legal rights of victims, etc.) included in training for compensation staff?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes → Continue with 4A 85% (44/52)
- 2. No → Skip to Q5

4A. How is the compensation staff trained?

→ Check all that apply

- 1. staff attends National Victim Assistance Academy 27% (12/44)
- 2. service providers provide training 43% (19/44)
- 3. in-house staff training 73% (32/44)
- 4. staff sent to other victim conferences 91% (40/44)
- 5. other ways, please describe: _____
 _____ 18% (8/44)

Financial Planning

5.

Are there sufficient funds to pay readily all the claims that are determined eligible by your program?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes → Skip to Q6 81% (42/52)
- 2. No → Continue with 5A, then 5B (10/52)

5A. Is anything being done to increase revenue?

→ Check all that apply

- 1. Nothing is being done. 0% (0/10)
- 2. State legislation is being amended to increase level of offender fines. 10% (1/10)
- 3. Fine collection rates are being improved. 10% (1/10)
- 4. Additional state appropriations are being sought. 40% (4/10)
- 5. Work with prosecutors, state correction officials and/or judges is being done to ensure that restitution is ordered and collected from convicted offenders. 60% (6/10)
- 6. A system to track payments of restitution to the program is being established. 60% (6/10)
- 7. Subrogation interests are being pursued 60% (6/10)
- 8. Pursuing civil liens against offenders for their tax refunds or prison wages 10% (1/10)
- 9. We have compensation office staff dedicated to revenue increasing issues. 30% (3/10)
- 10. Other strategies are being used to boost revenues, please describe:
_____ 20% (2/10)

5B. Is anything being done to contain costs?

→ Check all that apply

- 1. Less than 100% is being paid on claims (e.g., provider agrees to take less, use of state workers comp schedule or other insurance schedules) 60% (6/10)
- 2. Caps on pay outs are being reduced or instituted. 30% (3/10)
- 3. Other strategies are being used to contain costs, please describe:
_____ 30% (3/10)

6.

We are interested in finding out how much of your funding is carried over from one year to the next. Please provide the amounts carried over from one year to the next for the last several years:

\$ _____ carried over from FY 1996 funds to FY 1997 83% (43/52)

Average = \$1,695,968; Range = \$0 - \$13,711,000

\$ _____ carried over from FY 1997 funds to FY 1998 92% (48/52)

Average = \$1,818,359; Range = \$0 - \$11,778,000

\$ _____ carried over from FY 1998 funds to FY 1999 90% (47/52)

Average = \$1,835,278; Range = \$0 - \$19,458,000

7.

Do the program's revenues exceed your immediate payout needs?

→ Check *one* box that applies

1. Yes → Continue with 7A 67% (35/52)

2. No → Skip to Q8

7A. Is the program considering ways to increase benefits to victims?

→ Check *one* box that applies

1. Yes → Continue with 7B 94% (33/35)

2. No → Skip to Q8

7B. How?

→ Check *all* that apply

1. raising caps 73% (24/33)

2. expanding list of eligible expenses 91% (30/33)

3. expanding definition of eligible claimants (e.g., secondary victims) 67% (22/33)

4. extending filing deadlines 36% (12/33)

5. changing reporting requirements 36% (12/33)

6. expanding the types of crime covered 46% (15/33)

7. other, please describe: _____ 9% (3/33)

Outreach and Services to Victims

8.

What are the three most frequent ways that victims learn about the compensation program?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Prosecutors' offices:	30% (16/52)
Police:	25% (13/52)
Medical or other providers:	18% (9/52)
Victims' service programs:	18% (9/52)
Other:	6% (3/52)
Public awareness or education campaigns:	3% (2/52)

8A. Now, which of those three you just named seems to occur most often?

→ Place an asterisk by the #1 response

Prosecutors' offices:	56% (29/52)
Police:	19% (10/52)
Victims' service programs:	12% (6/52)
Medical or other providers:	8% (4/52)
Other:	4% (2/52)

9.

Which of the following outreach efforts does your program utilize?

→ Check *all* that apply

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. applications printed in other languages | 21% (11/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. applications available on the Internet | 44% (23/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. billboards or other printed notices in high crime areas | 10% (5/52) |

- 4. brochures and/or information cards printed in other languages 46% (24/52)
- 5. brochures in victim services agencies 92% (48/52)
- 6. programs in schools, churches, or other community organizations;
please describe: _____ 27% (14/52)
- 7. radio and/or TV public service announcements for non-English speakers 17% (9/52)
- 8. TDD line for hearing impaired 37% (19/52)
- 9. toll-free telephone number for victims to use 75% (39/52)
- 10. translators available by telephone 35% (18/52)
- 11. notification cards handed out by police 73% (38/52)
- 12. notification cards handed out by victims' service providers 58% (30/52)
- 13. training of criminal justice personnel on compensation 83% (43/52)
- 14. training health care providers on compensation 64% (33/52)
- 15. training victim services providers on compensation 87% (45/52)
- 16. other ways, please describe: 25% (13/52)
Other includes:
1) Signs posted in county offices (e.g., police department)
2) Mailings (brochures and newsletters) to medical service providers or prosecutor offices
- 17. Newspaper / newsletter 6% (3/52)
- 18. None 0% (0/52)

10.

Does your state have a victim's right amendment or other victims' legislation which specifies the right to be notified/informed of the availability of compensation benefits?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes → Continue with 10A 83% (43/52)
- 2. No → Skip to Q11
- 3. Don't know → Skip to Q11

10A. Further, does this amendment/law impose specific responsibilities on the state

compensation program to assure that all victims learn of these benefits?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes → Skip to Q11
- 2. No → Continue with 10B 79% (34/43)
- 3. Don't know → Skip to Q11

10B. Is a person or agency responsible for notifying victims of this right?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes, please specify: _____ 79% (27/34)
 - a) Law enforcement and/or prosecutor offices
 - b) Judges
 - c) Attorney General
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

11.

Are law enforcement officers required by state law to inform victims about the compensation program?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes 65% (34/52)
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

11A. How often do you believe law enforcement officers — in general, across departments — actually inform victims about compensation?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. nearly always 6% (3/52)
- 2. more often than not 21% (11/52)
- 3. about half the time 31% (16/52)
- 4. not very often 35% (18/52)
- 5. rarely or never 6% (3/52)

6. Don't know 2% (1/52)

12.

Are verification forms required before an application is considered filed?

→ Check one box that applies

1. Yes 14% (7/52)
 2. No

12A. Who is responsible for obtaining verification forms/police reports from law enforcement?

→ Check one box that applies

1. victim-claimant 10% (5/52)
 2. compensation staff 79% (41/52)
 3. both, please explain: _____ 10% (5/52)
 4. other, please explain: _____ 2% (1/52)

12B. Who is responsible for obtaining verification information from service providers?

→ Check one box that applies

1. victim-claimant 12% (6/52)
 2. compensation staff 67% (35/52)
 3. both, please explain: _____ 19% (10/52)
 4. other, please explain: _____ 2% (1/52)

12C. Who is responsible for obtaining verification information from employers?

→ Check one box that applies

1. victim-claimant 14% (7/52)
 2. compensation staff 64% (33/52)
 3. both, please explain: _____ 21% (11/52)
 4. other, please explain: _____ 2% (1/52)

13.

Do you refer victims to service providers or other resources, as needed?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes → Continue with 13A 85% (44/52)
- 2. No → Skip to Q14

13A. Of the programs/services listed below, which three do you make referrals to most often?

→ Check three that apply

- 1. domestic violence programs 19% (8/44)
- 2. sexual assault programs 10% (4/44)
- 3. child abuse programs 4% (2/44)
- 4. survivors of homicide programs 14% (6/44)
- 5. prosecutor-based victim advocates 23% (10/44)
- 6. law enforcement-based victim advocates 7% (3/44)
- 7. Department of Social Services 5% (2/44)
- 8. mental health programs 8% (4/44)
- 9. physical health programs 0% (0/44)
- 10. Medicaid office 2% (1/44)
- 11. Social Security office 2% (1/44)
- 12. homeless shelter 1% (1/44)
- 13. legal aid 3% (1/44)
- 14. victim hotline 0%
- 15. other: _____ 7% (4/44)

14.

Is there a special person(s) on staff designated to be a liaison with victims (e.g., to handle phone calls, complaints, questions, assist in filing forms) as well as make referrals to other agencies as needed?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes 42% (22/52)
- 2. No

14A. Have you applied to the State Victim Assistance Program for VOCA funding for a victim advocate position in your program?

→ Check one box that applies

1. Yes → Continue with 14B 14% (7/52)

2. No, please explain:

- 1) Do not need an advocate
- 2) Inappropriate to use an advocate (conflict of interest, need other staff first, should not act as an advocate, etc.)
- 3) Already have an advocate or advocates at the county level
- 4) Did not know this was available
- 5) Considering applying for a victim advocate position

→ Skip to Q15

14B. Has the funding been granted?

→ Check one box that applies

1. Yes 71% (5/7)

2. No

15.

Are you able to identify repeat claimants (same person, new crime)?

→ Check one box that applies

1. Yes → Continue with 15A 94% (49/52)

2. No → Skip to Q16

15A. What do you do with this information?

→ Check all that apply

1. Identify repeat victims who may need other victim services in addition to compensation services 37% (18/49)

2. Investigate possible fraud 33% (16/49)

3. Other things, please specify: _____

_____ 55% (27/49)

- 1) Both identify repeat victims and investigate fraud
- 2) Make sure the claim is not a duplicate claim by mistake
- 3) Open a new claim
- 4) Nothing
- 5) Use the same staff who handled the previous case(s)

Claims Processing

16.

Based on your knowledge of crime statistics in your state and the needs of crime victims, do you think the compensation program receives:

→ Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Too many claims 2% (1/52)
- 2. Too few claims 81% (42/52)
- 3. Right number of claims 12% (6/52)
- 4. Don't know 6% (3/52)

16A. Do you:

→ Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Count only one claim per crime regardless of secondary victims 62% (32/52)
- 2. Open new claims for secondary victims 37% (19/52)
- 3. Depends on the type of crime 2% (1/52)

16B. We note from your state's OVC Performance Reports for the last three/four years that the number of applications for compensation is up / down / about the same.

- If trend is UP, complete 16C 52% (27/52)
- If trend is DOWN, complete 16D 27% (14/52)
- If trend is ABOUT THE SAME, skip to Q17 21% (11/52)

16C. Why do you think this is?

- Check *all* that apply (27/52)
- 1. better outreach to potential claimants 85% (23/27)

- 2. the crime rates are up 7% (2/27)
- 3. service providers are doing a better job at assisting claimants with claims process 82% (22/27)
- 4. changes in statutory eligibility requirements have made more victims eligible or have expanded the types of losses the compensation program can cover 37% (10/27)
- 5. other sources of recompense, such as health insurance, public assistance, or restitution, are generally less available to victims 11% (3/37)
- 6. other: _____ 22% (6/37)

16D. Why do you think this is?

→ Check all that apply (14/52)

- 1. outreach has decreased or is less effective 21% (3/14)
- 2. the crime rate is down 71% (10/14)
- 3. service providers are not as effective at helping claimants with the claims process 7% (1/14)
- 4. changes in statutory eligibility requirements have made fewer victims eligible or have restricted the types of losses the compensation program can cover (such as pain and suffering) 7% (1/14)
- 5. other sources of recompense, such as health insurance, public assistance, or restitution, are generally more available to victims 71% (10/14)

17.

We note, from your state's OVC Performance Report for 1997 (*or most recent year*), that on average it takes _____ weeks to pay an approved claim. This is the total of the average number of weeks between receiving the claim and making a determination, and the average number of weeks between approving a claim and making payment. The following questions are designed to help us better understand how this processing time is calculated in your office.

Average = 29 weeks; Range = 5 – 286 weeks

17A. At what point does your office start counting processing time on a claim? Please indicate the one best choice that reflects the usual practice, even if there may be exceptions.

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. When the application is first received by the compensation office, even if it is not signed or notarized (where required) or does not include other important identifying information

- such as social security number 44% (23/52)
- 2. When the application is complete with regard to all critical information about the claimant (such as signature, social security number, notarization where required, address, etc.), even if it does not include a law enforcement report 39% (20/52)
- 3. When the application is complete with regard to all critical information about the claimant AND includes the law enforcement report 8% (4/52)
- 4. When the application is complete with regard to all critical information about the claimant, includes the law enforcement report, AND all other verifications of losses or expenses 8% (4/52)
- 5. Other: _____ 2%
_____ (1/52)

17B. What is your policy with regard to applications that are missing important documentation after a reasonable period of time? Please indicate the one best choice that applies in most cases.

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Incomplete claims are administratively closed after a certain period of time, please specify: _____ 40% (21/52)
- 2. After a certain period of time, the processing time clock is stopped and claims are held pending further efforts by the victim to complete the process, please specify: _____ 14%
_____ (7/52)
- 3. The clock keeps running (claims are never administratively closed or suspended) 10% (5/52)
- 4. Claim is processed with the information that has been received. 35% (18/52)
- 5. Other _____ 2% (1/52)

18.

In order to give us a better picture of how claims processing time is spent, please rank the top three of the following tasks that take up the most time.

→ Rank the top three, from 1 to 3

- _____ 1. securing/waiting for police report or verification of the crime
 1st: 19%; 2nd: 29%; 3rd: 27%
- _____ 2. securing/waiting for verification of losses or expenses (e.g., provider bills, employment records, medical report, counseling treatment plans, etc.)
 1st: 46%; 2nd: 29%; 3rd: 15%
- _____ 3. assisting/waiting for victims to provide all the necessary information on the application
 1st: 12%; 2nd: 25%; 3rd: 14%
- _____ 4. processing the claim (setting up the file, analyzing documentation, making the eligibility decision, and determining how much to pay)
 1st: 14%; 2nd: 8%; 3rd: 12%
- _____ 5. waiting for collateral sources to make payments
 1st: 4%; 2nd: 4%; 3rd: 21%
- _____ 6. waiting for the Board/Commission (where established) to make a determination
 1st: 2%; 2nd: 2%; 3rd: 6%
- _____ 7. waiting for the state government payment source to cut the check
 1st: 0%; 2nd: 4%; 3rd: 4%
- _____ 8. other: _____

 1st: 4%; 2nd: 0%; 3rd: 2%

19.

Do you have different or special procedures for different providers in terms of claims processing requirements (e.g., in amount of verification required)?

→ Check one box that applies

1. Yes, please explain briefly below for each. 50% (26/52))
2. No → Skip to 19A

- 1. funeral homes: _____ 62% (16/26)
 - 1) Require a receipt and/or a verification form
 - 2) Require a death certificate
 - 3) Verify life insurance
- 2. medical providers: _____ 62% (16/26)
 - 1) Require a verification form and/or itemized bill for treatment
 - 2) Doctor's treatment notes
 - 3) Medical records
 - 4) Insurance explanation of benefits and/or claim forms
- 3. mental health providers/therapists: _____ 92% (24/26)
 - 1) Mental Health Treatment Plan (must certify that treatment is related to the incident)
 - 2) Itemized bill
- 4. attorney's fees: _____ 35% (9/26)
 - 1) Affidavit or letter attesting hours billed and request for payment
 - 2) Documentation of the award and civil suit

19A. Do any of the above provider groups have special needs or complaints about the compensation claims process that are unique to the group?

→ Check one box that applies 58% (30/52))

- 1. Yes, please explain briefly below for each.
- 2. No → Skip to Q20

- 1. funeral homes: _____ 50% (15/30)
 - 1) Complain about payment and verification delays
 - 2) Think payment caps are too low
- 2. medical providers: _____ 43% (13/30)
 - 1) Complain about payment and verification delays
 - 2) Think payment caps are too low

3) Think length of treatment deadlines are too short

3. mental health providers/therapists: _____ 73% (22/30)

1) Complain about payment and verification delays

2) Complain about cumbersome paper work

3) Resist the release of treatment plan (client privilege)

4) Disagree with payment and treatment limitations

4. attorney's fees: _____ 17% (5/30)

20.

Do you have a procedure for expediting the processing of claims in emergency situations?

→ Check one box that applies

1. Yes → Continue with 20A 83% (43/52)

2. No → Skip to Q21

20A. What is this procedure?

Each response was specific to the individual program answering the question. In general, many of the emergency situation procedures shared the following characteristics:

1) Emergency claims are afforded a special status that usually moves them to the immediate attention of the Compensation staff.

2) Compensation checks are delivered much faster than under normal circumstances — sometimes within 24 hours.

3) Faxing summaries of the claim or communicating the summary of a claim verbally often supplant the usual forms required when processing a claim.

21.

We'd like to ask you your thoughts on whether compensation programs or local victim service programs are the best vehicles for paying for emergency expenses of victims, such as food, shelter, utilities, or transportation.

Do you believe the state compensation program is the best vehicle to pay for emergency expenses of crime victims (such as food, shelter, utilities, and transportation)?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes → Skip to Q22
- 2. No → Continue with 21A 90% (46/52)

21A. Why is it difficult for compensation to pay for these services?

→ Check all that apply (46/52)

- 1. Verification of the crime is too slow. 72% (33/46)
- 2. Verification of the loss is problematic. 70% (32/46)
- 3. Criteria are needed to limit emergency awards to cases of extreme hardship. 22% (10/46)
- 4. Timely interaction with a victim in distant parts of state is problematic. 48% (22/46)
- 5. Most emergency items are not compensable under state statutes. 74% (34/46)

22.

Do you believe that local assistance services are the best vehicle to pay for emergency expenses of crime victims, such as food, shelter, utilities, and transportation?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes → Continue with 22A 89% (46/52)
- 2. No → Skip to Q23

22A. Why are local assistance services the best vehicle to pay for emergency expenses?

→ Check all that apply

- 1. They're not limited by eligibility requirements. 78% (36/46)
- 2. They can provide immediate access to resources locally. 100% (46/46)
- 3. Other reason, please explain: _____ 28% (13/46)

Claims Determinations

23.

How do you ensure consistency in decision-making?

→ Check all that apply

- 1. conduct regular staff training 62% (32/52)
- 2. have staff meetings to discuss difficult issues, e.g., contributory conduct 73% (38/52)
- 3. quality control 44% (23/52)
- 4. maintain a record or index of claims approved and denied, so that reference can be made to past precedent 56% (29/52)
- 5. use a checklist of eligibility issues 56% (29/52)
- 6. use a checklist of payment considerations 35% (18/52)
- 7. use detailed written claims processing manual 48% (25/52)
- 8. other ways, please specify: _____ 29% (15/52)

Other includes:

- 1) Continuity of personnel on the Board or our office
- 2) One person makes the decision

24.

OVC data indicate that the claim approval rate was _____% in FY 1995, _____% in FY 1996, _____% in FY 1997, and _____% in FY 1998, and _____% in FY 1999 (if available). Are these figures accurate?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes 83% (43/52)
- 2. No

FY 1995 Average: 78% Range: 68%-88% (2 respondents)

FY 1996 Average: 67% Range: 37%-91% (51 respondents)

FY 1997 Average: 68% Range: 41%-93% (51 respondents)

FY 1998 Average: 68% Range: 37%-94% (52 respondents)

FY 1999 Average: N/A

There seems to be a general trend toward **increasing / decreasing / stabilizing** approval rates over these years.

- If trend is **INCREASING**, complete 24A 31% (16/52)
- If trend is **DECREASING**, complete 24B 29% (15/52)
- If trend is **STABILIZING**, skip to Q25 39% (21/52)

24A. Why do you think the approval rate is up?

→ Check *all that apply* (16/52)

- 1. Our office has more resources (more staff, or recent training, or better automation, or clearer policies, etc.) to provide services to claimants to help them prepare better applications. 44% (7/16)
- 2. Service providers' assistance to victims in preparing claims has improved. 50% (8/16)
- 3. Our office has more resources (more staff, or recent training, or better automation, or clearer policies, etc.) to use in the verification process (e.g., getting police reports or providers' bills). 44% (7/16)
- 4. Other changes in claims processing procedures have increased the approval rate. 44% (7/16)
- 5. Statutory eligibility requirements have become less restrictive. 25% (4/16)
- 6. Eligibility rules or policies have become less restrictive. 38% (6/16)
- 7. There has been variation in interpretation of eligibility rules by compensation staff. 19% (3/16)
- 8. Other reasons, please explain: _____ 38% (6/16)

24B. Why do you think the approval rate is down?

→ Check *all that apply* (15/52)

- 1. Our office has fewer resources (less staff, or loss of training opportunities, or problems with automation, or unclear policies, etc.) to provide services to claimants to help them prepare better applications. 7% (1/15)
- 2. Service providers' assistance to victims in preparing claims has gotten worse or less frequent. 0% (0/15)
- 3. Our office has fewer resources (less staff, or loss of training opportunities, or problems with automation, or unclear policies, etc.) to use in the verification process (e.g., getting police reports or providers' bills). 20% (3/15)

- 4. Other changes in claims processing procedures have decreased the approval rate.
33% (5/15)
- 5. Statutory eligibility requirements have become more restrictive. 0% (0/15)
- 6. Eligibility rules or policies have become more restrictive. 13% (2/15)
- 7. There has been variation in interpretation of eligibility rules by compensation staff.
20% (3/15)
- 8. Other reasons, please explain: _____ 80% (12/15)
Other includes:
 - 1) Other sources are supplying the benefits
 - 2) Victim contributory conduct is increasing
 - 3) More marginal claims are being submitted (because of increased outreach efforts)

25.

Which three categories of compensation claims were the most likely to be paid out at the category cap?

→ Check top three

- 1. emergency awards 6% (3/52)
- 2. funeral benefits 32% (17/52)
- 3. lost wages 15% (8/52)
- 4. medical expenses 18% (9/52)
- 5. mental health benefits 16% (8/52)
- 6. moving expenses 1% (2/52)
- 7. state has no category caps 0% (0/52)
- 8. No other caps / chose less than three 6% (3/52)
- 8. other categories, please specify: _____ 6% (3/52)

25A. Approximately what percentage of the claims paid in FY 1997 in each category were for victims/survivors of gun violence?

→ Enter percentage or write "NA" if data are not available

- ____% 1. emergency awards 6% (3/52)

Average = 0.33% Range = 0 – 1%

____% 2. funeral/burial benefits 8% (4/52)
Average = 18% Range = 0 – 50%

____% 3. lost wages/economic support 6% (3/52)
Average = 13% Range = 1 – 34%

____% 4. medical/dental expenses 6% (3/52)
Average = 36% Range = 5 – 53%

____% 5. mental health benefits 4% (2/52)
Average = 17% Range = 0 – 34%

____% 6. moving expenses 6% (3/52)
Average = 10% Range = 0 – 31%

Other categories, please specify category and percentage: Number of responses
was negligible

____% 7. _____
____% 8. _____
____% 9. _____

→ Examine OVC-supplied data on the Compensation Summary Sheet and determine the overall trend in advance of the interview (data point 13)

25B. We note from your state's OVC Performance Reports that the average amount of a total awarded claim over the last three/four years has increased / decreased / stayed about the same.

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. If trend has INCREASED, ask 25C 39% (20/52)
- 2. If trend has DECREASED, ask 25D 33% (17/52)
- 3. If trend has STAYED ABOUT THE SAME, skip to Q26 29% (15/52)

25C. Why do you think this is?

→ Check all that apply (20/52)

- 1. cap on total awards has increased 35% (7/20)
- 2. category caps have increased 45% (9/20)
- 3. eligible expenses have increased 40% (8/20)
- 4. the types of claims have changed; please describe: _____
_____ 25% (5/20)

Changes in claims include:

- 1) Expanding definition of “victim” to include secondary victims
- 2) More violent crimes (claims are more expensive because of the injuries that occur as a result of violent crimes)
- 3) Expanding the types of eligible claims

- 5. other reasons: _____ 40% (8/20)

Other includes:

- 1) Medical services are more expensive
- 2) The number of claims has increased

25D. Why do you think this is?

→ Check all that apply (17 respondents)

- 1. cap on total awards has decreased 0% (0/17)
- 2. category caps have decreased 12% (2/17)
- 3. eligible expenses have decreased 0% (0/17)
- 4. the types of claims have changed; please describe: _____
_____ 24% (4/17)

Changes in claims include:

- 1) The cap for compensation from property crimes has decreased
- 2) Fewer violent crimes (claims are less expensive)

- 5. other reasons: _____ 71%
(12/17)

Other includes:

- 1) Decreased payment for medical expenses
- 2) Don't know
- 3) Supplemental payments are not included in this figure

26.

Information from your OVC State Performance Report for FY 1997 (or most recent year for which data are available) indicates that _____% of claims determined during the year were "not approved for payment." We would like to get more information to better understand what this figure means.

Average = 32% Range = 7 – 59%

Of these "not approved for payment" determinations, approximately what percentage were due to the following reasons? (Should add to 100%) 85% (44/52)

_____% 1. incomplete paperwork

Average = 10% Range = 0-63%

_____% 2. missed deadlines

Average = 6% Range = 0-50%

_____% 3. failure to report to law enforcement

Average = 4% Range = 0-28%

_____% 4. failure to cooperate with law enforcement

Average = 9% Range = 0-35%

_____% 5. contributory conduct

Average = 28% Range = 0-100%

_____% 6. claims for crimes not covered by compensation

Average = 8% Range = 0-35%

_____% 7. claims for losses not covered by compensation

Average = 8% Range = 0-35%

_____% 8. all expenses paid by collateral sources

Average = 15% Range = 0-100%

_____% 9. other: _____

Average = 15% Range = 0-50%

Other includes:

- 1) No (insufficient) evidence of a crime
- 2) Non-residential claim
- 3) Withdrawn by claimant
- 4) Failure to cooperate
- 5) Not an eligible claimant (felony convictions, contributory conduct)

_____ 10. don't know 15%

27.

Short of a formal appeals process, can the claimant seek a reconsideration of a determination to deny a claim?

→ Check one box that applies

1. Yes → Continue with 27A 85% (44/52)
2. No → Skip to Q28

27A. In approximately what percent of cases during the last fiscal year where the claim was denied, was a request for reconsideration filed?

_____ % (33/44)

Average = 18% Range = 0 – 89%

27B. In what percent of cases filed for reconsideration during the last fiscal year was the claim subsequently approved?

_____ % (29/44)

Average = 34% Range = 0 – 90%

28.

What percentage of denied or ineligible claims are appealed?

_____ % (46/52)

Average = 23% Range = 0 – 89%

28A. Which reasons for denial are most frequently appealed? Please rank the top three reasons.

→ Rank the top three, from 1 to 3

_____ 1. incomplete paperwork

1st: 2%; 2nd: 13%; 3rd: 4%

_____ 2. missed deadlines

1st: 6%; 2nd: 10%; 3rd: 13%

_____ 3. failure to report to law enforcement

1st: 6%; 2nd: 6%; 3rd: 10%

_____ 4. failure to cooperate with law enforcement

1st: 8%; 2nd: 13%; 3rd: 21%

_____ 5. contributory conduct

1st: 54%; 2nd: 15%; 3rd: 8%

_____ 6. claims for crimes not covered by compensation

1st: 2%; 2nd: 13%; 3rd: 6%

_____ 7. claims for losses not covered by compensation

1st: 4%; 2nd: 8%; 3rd: 13%

_____ 8. all expenses paid by collateral sources

1st: 0%; 2nd: 4%; 3rd: 10%

_____ 9. other: _____

1st: 10%; 2nd: 10%; 3rd: 6%

Other includes:

- 1) Lack of sufficient evidence that a crime occurred
- 2) Not an eligible claimant (felony convictions)

_____ 10. don't know
1st: 8%; 2nd: 0%; 3rd: 0%

_____ 11. Skip
1st: 2%; 2nd: 2%; 3rd: 2%

_____ 12. No others / chose less than three
1st: 0%; 2nd: 6%; 3rd: 6%

28B. What percentage of appealed claim denials are reversed?

_____ % 77% (40/52)

Average = 26% Range = 0 – 95%

29.

Does your compensation program have a written policy or procedure in place to guide decision-making in cases that may involve contributory conduct or illegal behavior on the part of the claimant?

→ Check one box that applies

1. Yes → Continue with 29A 75% (39/52)
 2. No → Skip to Q30

29A. Who makes the final decision?

→ Check one box that applies

1. an administrator 25% (10/40)
 2. the board 35% (14/40)
 3. some other individual or group, please specify: _____ 40% (16/52)

Other includes:

- 1) Claims or case manager
- 2) Judges from Court of Claims
- 3) Staff from Compensation Office

29B. Which of the following are examples of contributory conduct justifying a full or partial denial

of a claim (understanding that there may be exceptions based on the facts of a case)?

→ Check *all* that apply

	In most cases	Only where causal connection exists
1. victim engaged in felony or misdemeanor at the time of the victimization	<input type="checkbox"/> 60%	<input type="checkbox"/> 35%
2. victim engaged in gang activity at the time of the victimization	<input type="checkbox"/> 40%	<input type="checkbox"/> 48%
3. victim selling illegal drugs	<input type="checkbox"/> 80%	<input type="checkbox"/> 18%
4. victim possessing illegal drugs	<input type="checkbox"/> 38%	<input type="checkbox"/> 55%
5. victim under the influence of illegal drugs	<input type="checkbox"/> 25%	<input type="checkbox"/> 63%
6. victim under the influence of alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/> 10%	<input type="checkbox"/> 83%
7. victim engaged in prostitution	<input type="checkbox"/> 25%	<input type="checkbox"/> 80%
8. victim illegally carrying a weapon	<input type="checkbox"/> 28%	<input type="checkbox"/> 60%
9. other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> 3%	<input type="checkbox"/> 8%

Underserved Populations

30.

In your opinion, are there certain categories of crime victims who apply for compensation less frequently than expected based on known victimization rates?

→ Check *one* box that applies

1. Yes → Continue with 30A 85% (44/52)
2. No → Skip to Q31

30A. Who do you think may be under-utilizing the compensation program? Victims of:

→ Check *all* that apply

- 1. child physical abuse 49% (22/45)
- 2. child sexual abuse 53% (24/45)
- 3. DUI/DWI crashes 16% (7/45)
- 4. domestic violence 76% (34/45)
- 5. adult sexual assault 60% (27/45)
- 6. elder abuse 71% (32/45)
- 7. adults molested as children 36% (16/45)
- 8. survivors of homicide victims 20% (9/45)
- 9. Robbery 13% (6/45)
- 10. Assault 18% (8/45)
- 11. other violent crime 11% (5/45)
- 12. Stalking 31% (14/45)
- 13. hate or bias crimes 31% (14/45)
- 14. Terrorism 7% (3/45)
- 15. gang violence 16% (7/45)
- 16. other: _____ 2% (1/45)

30B. Why do you think eligible crime victims may be discouraged from applying for compensation?

→ Check all that apply

- 1. contributory conduct rules 16% (7/45)
- 2. crime reporting requirements 53% (24/45)
- 3. Embarrassment 67% (30/45)
- 4. fear of retaliation by offender 58% (26/45)
- 5. filing time requirements 18% (8/45)
- 6. need to have signature notarized 4% (2/45)
- 7. do not know about compensation 87% (39/45)
- 8. fatigue from paperwork requirements 27% (12/45)
- 9. mistrust of authority 42% (19/45)
- 10. other reasons, please describe: _____ 16% (7/45)

Other includes:

- 1) Emotional trauma
- 2) Perception of compensation as “public welfare”
- 3) Language barrier

31.

Some states report that there are groups, based on demographic or geographic characteristics, who are or maybe under-utilizing compensation programs. Is that true in your state?

→ Check **one** box that applies

- 1. Yes → Continue with 31A 65% (34/52)
- 2. No → Skip to Q32
- 3. Don't know → Skip to Q32

31A. Which groups are under-utilizing the compensation services, given the demographics and/or victimization rates in your state?

→ Check **all** that apply

- 1. persons with disabilities 21% (7/34)
- 2. ethnic/racial minorities 47% (16/34)
- 3. Females 21% (7/34)
- 4. Gays 32% (11/34)
- 5. Immigrants 27% (9/34)
- 6. Indian reservation residents 35% (12/34)
- 7. inner-city residents 15% (5/34)
- 8. Males 6% (2/34)
- 9. non-English speakers 62% (21/34)
- 10. remote/rural area residents 71% (24/34)
- 11. senior citizens 38% (13/34)
- 12. Teens 9% (3/34)
- 13. other groups, please specify: _____ 3% (1/34)

Coordination

32.

What mechanisms do you use to coordinate your compensation program with the state-level VOCA assistance program?

→ Check *all* that apply

- 1. None 14% (7/52)
- 2. joint staff meetings 35% (18/52)
- 3. joint staff retreats 10% (5/52)
- 4. joint training conferences for compensation and assistance staff 60% (31/52)
- 5. Memorandum of Understanding defining how to coordinate 0% (0/52)
- 6. periodic written reports 12% (6/52)
- 7. reciprocal cross-training 27% (14/52)
- 8. regular joint administrator meetings 25% (13/52)
- 9. VOCA assistance administrator sits on Advisory Board for compensation program 10% (5/52)
- 10. VOCA compensation administrator or staff sits on victim assistance grant review panels 25% (13/52)
- 11. VOCA compensation administrator assists in planning process for distribution of assistance funds 17% (9/52)
- 12. VOCA assistance administrator or staff asked to review and comment on application forms, compensation statutes, rules, or other policy documents 27% (14/52)
- 13. compensation staff or administrator provides training to VOCA assistance subrecipients 56% (29/52)
- 14. VOCA assistance administrator or staff provides input in developing outreach initiatives for compensation program 25% (13/52)
- 15. other mechanisms, please specify: _____ 31% (16/52)
Other includes:
 - 1) Located in the same agency or building
 - 2) Share the same director

33.

Does the compensation program have a statewide directory of victim service providers?

→ Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes 75% (39/52)
- 2. No

Record-Keeping Systems

34.

We're interested in understanding more about the information you keep about claims, in addition to that required by the OVC reporting forms. What additional information do you keep about claims in a database?

→ Check *all* that apply

- 1. None 4% (2/52)
- 2. the date(s) additional supporting materials are sought 56% (29/52)
- 3. the date claim was awarded, rejected, or denied 94% (46/52)
- 4. the reasons for denial or rejection 92% (48/52)
- 5. whether the claimant has a prior felony conviction 15% (8/52)
- 6. whether the victimization is gun related 23% (12/52)
- 7. other information, please describe: _____ 37% (19/52)

Other includes:

- 1) Type and amount of award (payment information)
- 2) Offender/victim demographic information
- 3) Restitution and subrogation payments

34A. What information do you collect about claimants during the application process?

→ Check *all* that apply

- 1. None 2% (1/52)
- 2. Gender 92% (48/52)
- 3. race/ethnicity 79% (41/52)
- 4. Disability 67% (35/52)
- 5. type of residence (i.e., rural, urban, suburban, tribal) 15% (8/52)
- 6. how the claimant learned about the compensation program 77% (40/52)

34B. What information about claimants do you enter into a database or compile statistical reports on?

→ Check all that apply

- 1. None 14% (7/52)
- 2. Gender 81% (42/52)
- 3. race/ethnicity 62% (32/52)
- 4. Disability 48% (25/52)
- 5. type of residence (i.e., rural, urban, suburban, tribal) 12% (6/52)
- 6. how the claimant learned about the compensation program 64% (33/52)

Interaction with the Federal Government

35.

How would you improve OVC's *new* State Performance Report?

→ Check all that apply

- a. clarify the instructions on: _____
_____ 14% (7/52)

Suggestions include:

- 1) How to calculate the average time for processing and paying a claim
- 2) How to count victims and initial claims
- 3) What expenses can be covered by the 5% allowance of VOCA funds for administrative purposes

- b. change the narrative questions to more structured response formats 15% (8/52)
- c. eliminate the questions on: _____
_____ 12% (6/52)

Suggestions include:

- 1) Calculating the average time for processing and paying a claim
- 2) The narrative questions that have been added
- 3) Questions on claims, filings, denials, and awards —
Compensation programs are too different to provide adequate comparisons

- d. add questions on: _____
_____ 8% (4/52)

Suggestions include:

- 1) The number of claims that are not approved, broken out by denials for cause and ineligible claims
- 2) How individual state programs are structured
- 3) How states count incoming claims

e. other: _____

_____ 79% (41/52)

Suggestions include:

- 1) The new form is an improvement over the previous form / no suggestions for improvement
- 2) Not familiar enough or would like to use the new form more before making any suggestions
- 3) Improve the definition of how to calculate the average time for processing and paying a claim

36.

From what you know about crime victims in your state, what would you like to see changed in your compensation program to better meet their needs?

→ Check all that apply

1. it should be expanded to cover additional types of losses, such as:

_____ 54% (28/52)

Suggested changes include:

- 1) Compensation for secondary victims
- 2) Relocation expenses
- 3) Crime scene cleanup
- 4) Travel expenses

2. it should expand outreach to victims of crimes, such as:

_____ 35% (18/52)

Suggested changes include:

- 1) Crimes involving cross-cultural issues

- 2) Victims in rural areas
- 3) Victims of elder abuse

3. it should put more emphasis on underserved victim groups, such as:

46%

(24/52)

Suggested changes include:

- 1) Non-English speaking populations
- 2) The elderly
- 3) Children
- 4) Victims of domestic violence
- 5) Victims of sexual assault

4. overall and/or categorical payment caps should be raised 44% (23/52)

5. the criminal justice reporting requirement should be lengthened or eliminated 8% (4/52)

6. the amount of paperwork required of claimants should be reduced 12% (6/52)

7. other: _____
37% (19/52)

Suggested changes include:

- 1) More staff members
- 2) Increased outreach efforts
- 3) Increased coordination with the Assistance program

37.

How would you like to see your state's VOCA assistance program changed?

→ Check *all* that apply

- 1. State VOCA administrator should monitor subgrantees to ensure compliance with VOCA mandate to assist victims with applying for compensation. 33% (17/52)
- 2. State VOCA administrator should ensure training about compensation is provided to subgrantees. 33% (17/52)
- 3. VOCA subgrantees should be required to provide training about compensation to

their staffs. 35% (18/52)

- 4. More VOCA subgrants should be awarded to law enforcement-based programs. 10% (5/52)
- 5. Compensation administrators should be included in VOCA assistance grant recommendation/decision committees. 27% (14/52)
- 6. State VOCA grant process should be more open and accountable. 10% (5/52)
- 7. Other: _____ 50% (29/52)
Other includes:
 - 1) Develop consistent performance standards
 - 2) Fund more equitably (less funds for domestic violence and sexual assault)
 - 3) Create a statewide review team to review how funds are being spent
 - 4) Make Compensation training mandatory for VOCA Assistance recipients

38.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about the VOCA program that we haven't covered in this interview?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes → Write response on the back of this page 19% (10/52)
- 2. No

39.

Please send a copy of your compensation application form to the Urban Institute:

Ryan Allen
The Urban Institute
2100 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

Thank you for your time

Appendix B

State-level Site Visit Interview Guidelines

STATE COMPENSATION ADMINISTRATORS SITE VISIT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Administrative location of compensation program

What is the overall mission of the agency in which the compensation program is located? What other functions does it serve besides administering the compensation program? Can you provide an organizational chart for the agency as a whole? Where exactly is the agency in the state's governance structure? How is the agency funded, besides federal VOCA funds? How independently does it function; how many layers of authority are above it? What are the agency's networks with other state, local, and private sector organizations? How does the compensation program's placement in this agency influence how the program operates? What are the advantages and disadvantages of having the compensation program located in this agency? How long has the compensation program been located in this agency? Where was it housed previously? If transferred in last 5 years, why? Should it be transferred to another agency? Why? Is such a transfer in the works?

Compensation staff, management, and training

Can you provide an organizational chart for the comp program? What qualifications are required for hiring? How many staff members are there? What are typical caseloads, and how are cases assigned to staff members? Are they dedicated to the compensation program, or is their time shared with other programs housed within this agency? How are responsibilities for the three major functions of the program — administration, investigation, and decision-making divided among program staff? Is there overlap of responsibilities? Is any part of the investigative process contracted out? Explain.

What and who is included in the three major program functions:

- *Administration:* Rule-making? Budget monitoring? Data maintenance? Statistical reporting? Staff supervision? Staff training? Public education? Coordination with other state programs? With law enforcement agencies? With victim service providers? Other functions?
- *Investigation:* Gathering documentation? Verifying documentation validity? Checking collateral sources? Other functions?
- *Decision-making:* Determining claimants' eligibility? Assessing contributory misconduct? Making award/denial or other determination decisions? Determining level of benefit to be paid? Other functions?

How often is each kind of compensation staff training reported in the national survey provided? What topics are addressed? (e.g., Cultural sensitivity? PTSD? Impact of crime? Medical diagnoses? Victim rights? Other?) How do you assess the effectiveness of the training? Get copies of training materials.

How are staff performance evaluations done? How is excellence recognized and rewarded? Awards for handling high caseloads? Any formal system to track how well individual staff handle their cases? What's the staff turnover rate? How is staff management and morale addressed – regular meetings, case conferences, etc.?

Financial Planning

Trends in recent years

OVC data indicate that the trend for federal funding to your state in the last several years is one of (*increased/decreased/stabilized, as appropriate to the state*) funding. This indicates that state expenditures have (*increased/decreased/stabilized, as appropriate*), since the federal payout is a 40% match of total expenditures in the previous year. What accounts for this pattern? What have been the impacts of any peaks or valleys in funding? What are your plans and projections for the future? Have you been able, or do you plan, to use federal funds as a catalyst for greater commitment from the private sector and state government?

Decentralized systems (if used in state)

If your state uses regional offices, what do the regional offices do work with local victims and community agencies? Do outreach in the local area? To what degree do they have autonomy over management and funding issues? The application, investigation, and determinations processes?

How are decentralized systems funded? Does each county or region fund its own program? What problems, if any, does that cause in very poor areas? Does the state have a mechanism to reapportion funds as needed among areas?

If program indicates lack of sufficient funds (Survey Q. 5) ask:

If the program is funded in part with fines from the state, are you monitoring how courts levy and collect fines? What proportion of fines levied for victim compensation are collected? What steps are taken to increase collection of fines or increase revenue in other ways? What other state agencies or programs look to criminal fines for revenue, i.e., is any other agency competing for the same funding source? How do you see the state's commitment to this program? Support of governor? Attorney General? Legislature? What's your opinion based on? E.g., Statements by governor? Changes in law? Etc. What are plans for and difficulties in getting additional state appropriations? Explain.

If program indicates that funds are carried over from one year to next (Survey Q 6) ask:

Why are funds carried over? Part of usual program management to cover claims at beginning of year? Program is overfunded? Or what?

If program indicates that revenues exceed payout needs (Survey Q 7) ask:

How has the rule implemented in FY 1997 that you have the year of award plus three years to obligate funds impacted on your program's financial management? How else would you like to respond to your current funding situation expand eligible expenses? Eligible claimants? Types of crime covered? Raise caps? Other? Are any of these changes in the works? Any obstacles?

Program Standards and Coordination

Standards

How are program standards operationalized? Do you use the standards developed by NACVCB for compensation programs? Please explain.

Coordination

What are the most effective mechanisms for coordinating with the VOCA assistance program, of all those you reported in survey Q. 32? Why? What's not really worth the time and effort? Explain. Are there any obstacles to coordination between VOCA assistance and compensation programs?

How do you work with federal victim/witness programs (U.S. Attorneys' Offices, FBI field offices, military installations)? What obstacles arise for your program in serving federal crime victims, and for the federal victim/witness programs and their victims in accessing compensation?

Oversight and use of feedback

Is there an advisory board to provide input on the VOCA compensation program? How often and for what purposes do they meet? Who serves on the board? How are they selected/appointed? Are they paid? Any victims? Is this the same Board that makes final decisions on claims? Any overlap? *We will talk to several board members including victim representative if possible*

How (if at all) do you receive input from victims and/or service providers on satisfaction with services and unmet needs? What changes (if any) have been made based on feedback from victims, service providers or from Board's advice?

Crisis response plans

Have compensation and assistance administrators met to develop a joint crisis response plan in the event of mass violence or terrorism? Is there a joint plan? Have you experienced a crisis situation? Lessons learned?

Outreach and Unmet Needs

Training and outreach efforts

How often do you provide training for different professional groups? What topics are included in the training and who provides it (compensation program director, staff, or consultants)? How often are materials reviewed and revised? Get copies of training materials. Who else would you like to provide training to, and what are the obstacles?

GET THIS BEFORE SITE VISIT, PROBABLY ALL ON INTERNET OR IN BOOKLETS: Does your program have a newsletter? Who is the target audience? Do you maintain an internet site? A claimant handbook? Get copies. What about an 800 number? Is that answered by a person? What types of information does it provide?

What materials are used to inform victims about compensation? Get copies of brochures, posters, cards, etc. How do victims obtain these materials? Are applications mailed to everyone who has filed a criminal report that involved injury? Does compensation program get lists of victims from Medical Examiners' offices throughout the state?

Is there a victim advocate on compensation staff? How many? Paid for by VOCA? What does this person(s) do? If no advocates, why not? *We plan to talk to this person to find out about main issues victims raise about the compensation system, service providers, and the criminal justice system.*

How do you support victim service providers in their obligation to refer victims to the compensation program? What, if any, challenges do victim service providers and law enforcement personnel face in referring victims to compensation or assisting them in the application process? How are these being addressed? What else would you like to do? Do you rely on victim providers and law enforcement at a local level to pre-screen, i.e., to encourage or discourage applicants from filing based on their understanding of the eligibility criteria and whether the claim would be awarded? Are there some service providers who refer a lot of inappropriate claims that must be denied? How do you deal with this?

Do you have any good marketing strategies for your comp program? How do they work? Can you find a way to use VOCA funds for this outreach? Explain.

Underserved populations and gaps in services (Survey Qs. 30-31)

Who are the underserved victim groups in your state (e.g., victims of particular types of crime, Native Americans, rural residents, the elderly, immigrants, non-English speakers, gays and lesbians, etc.)? How have they been identified? Why have they been underserved, i.e., why do you think they are underutilizing your program? What's being done to reach them? What special issues does each have? Do you think most of their needs are being met by service programs?

(If not discussed previously) In what ways could the compensation program be changed to better meet victims' needs expand eligible expenses? Eligible claimants? Types of crime covered? Raise caps? Other? Is anything being done about needed changes, and what are the obstacles?

Victim compensation is a payer of last resort. Do you think that some claimants may not file for comp because they do not want to notify their insurance company of their victimization? For example, not wanting to tell employer about domestic abuse or rape. How do you know that this is a problem? How big a problem?

How does your state define the victim's obligation to cooperate with law enforcement? Do you think that the state legislation regulations are too restrictive and impose reporting requirements that discourage crime victims from applying for compensation? What barriers could be removed without jeopardizing efficient claims processing? Do you think that providing compensation to victims encourages cooperation with law enforcement that would not otherwise occur? Explain. Who or what is considered law enforcement for reporting purposes on tribal lands?

How does your program define workplace violence? Do you keep any statistics or otherwise track workplace violence in the claims you receive? Please describe any special initiatives you may have in this area.

Claims Processing

Claims statistics

OVC data indicate that in recent years your state has seen an *(increasing, decreasing, stabilizing as appropriate)* trend in the numbers of applications received. Can you expand

on the factors you reported in the national survey (#16) that account for this (e.g., how has outreach or assistance in the claims process improved?). What has been the impact of better technology and communications systems? Are you able to network with service providers to have claims sent over electronically? How have these changes impacted on the program's functioning? What do you project for future trends?

More details on all claims processing tasks mentioned in Q 18, particularly getting verifications

States define commonly-used terms very differently. In your state, what exactly is meant by: claim filed (e.g., are clearly ineligible claims considered filed or denied immediately without receiving a case number), application paperwork complete (e.g., are notarizations required?), verifications complete, determination made, denied, administratively closed, determined ineligible, approved, paid (in whole or in part), and other major steps in claims processing?

If you count only one claim per crime incident (even if multiple victims each file claims), what's the average number of claims per incident? What percent of claims are incomplete when first received (in terms of signatures, notarizations, victim's identifying information, etc.), and how long does it take, on average, to complete them?

OVC statistics and your survey responses indicate that in your state the average claims processing time is (*fill in for each state*), which is (*higher than, lower than, or about at the average for [as appropriate]*) the national average of 29 weeks. How does your system for counting processing time impact on your state's average? Is there a great deal of variance in your state? Does variance depend on the type of losses, the type of victimization, or other factors?

Do you study work flow to analyze how process can be shortened? Results? What procedures are in place to distinguish as quickly as possible the difference between eligible and ineligible claims? Are claims that are clearly ineligible counted in claims filed, or rejected before being given a number? Does state have policy on this or left to individual claims investigator?

Who pays for the process of verifications? State program or claimant? If claimant, do you have evidence that this discourages applications or the completion of the process? Are many claims being dropped before files are complete? What are you doing to reduce the cost of verification for claimants?

Details on emergency award processing

What types of crimes and losses are eligible for emergency processing? Does the victim have to prove financial hardship to qualify for an emergency award? What does that mean? How does victim show it? What is average processing time for emergency awards?

Policy on supplemental awards

Are claimants notified that they can apply for supplemental awards if there are additional economic losses or collateral resources become unavailable? Does program staff contact claimants after time has passed to see if they have more expenses, e.g., need for counseling six months after crime?

Awards for mental health expenses

If your program has experienced an increase in claims for mental health counseling, to what do you attribute this increase? What difficulties does program find in processing these claims? Does state have mental health category cap? Is it too low/high?

What strategy do you have to handle backlog?

If no backlog now, did you ever have one and how was it handled?

We plan to interview one or two claims investigators to find out how they were trained, problems they have with caseload, sensitivity to victim needs, etc.

Decision Making

Determination and award statistics

According to OVC records and the national survey, your state's approval rate is *(fill in for state)*, which is *(higher than average, lower than average, about average as appropriate)* for the nation. What factors account for this? What factors account for trends in recent years? Your state's average award amount is *(fill in for state)*, which is *(higher than average, lower than average, about average as appropriate)* for that nation. What factors account for this? Trends in recent years, and reasons?

Who makes final claims decisions and how?

Board, administrative agency staff or director, or other? If board, how many are needed to make a decision? Do simple cases get single commissioner review and complex ones go to a full board? Explain process.

Who makes decision on contributory misconduct?

For the elements which must have a causal connection with the crime to be considered contributory misconduct, how is this connection determined? Based on what information? Does state have written guidelines? *Get them.* Do you deny outright or reduce in proportion to misconduct? Do you deny for prior felony conviction? Have there been any judicial interpretations of contributory misconduct in your state? *Case citations.* Do you deny claims for victims under the influence of alcohol at time of victimization? Do you have any evidence that this policy may have an adverse affect on certain classes of victims? For example, victims of domestic abuse or victims on tribal lands? How could this policy be changed to better serve victims?

How are decision makers trained?

Training on statutory eligibility requirements and benefits. Do they use a checklist of eligibility issues and payment considerations? *Get it.* If not, what do they use? Do you have an expert on staff, or on the board, to determine complex cases with medical or mental health reports? If not, how do you handle them?

Appeals

Do you have a mechanism to enable victims to inquire about the decision? Do you send a "pre-denial" notice to victims to give them a chance to provide additional documentation before the application is formally denied? *Get copy of letter/forms used to notify victims of decisions and to inform them of their appeal rights.* Do you have written rules to conduct appeals hearings? Do you have clear time frames for submitting appeals? Do you conduct hearings at different locations in the state to make it more convenient for victims to appeal? Do you use telephone or video conferences for appeals? Do you encourage victim advocates or attorneys to attend hearing and/or appeals with their clients?

Interactions with the Federal Government

Federal guidelines

How would you like to see the federal guidelines on administrative and training allowances changed?

How would you like to see the guidelines on victim eligibility (by type of victim (i.e., secondary), type of crime, type of covered losses) changed?

Federal resources

What have been your experiences in working with federal support systems, included TTAC, online resources, your OVC project monitors, etc.? What other services would you like to see available?

Federal reporting requirements

What specific changes would you like to see in the State Performance Report? Did you have input when OVC revised this form?

STATE VOCA ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATORS: SITE VISIT INTERVIEW GUIDE

I. Administrative and Financial Management

Administrative location of assistance program

What is the overall mission of the agency in which the assistance program is located? What other functions does it serve besides administering the assistance program? Can you provide an organizational chart for the agency as a whole? Where exactly is the agency in the state's governance structure? How is the agency funded, besides federal VOCA funds? How independently does it function; how many layers of authority are above it? What are the agency's networks with other state, local, and private sector organizations? How does the assistance program's placement in this agency influence how the program operates? What are the advantages and disadvantages of having the assistance program located in this agency? How long has the assistance program been located in this agency? Where was it housed previously? If transferred in last 5 years, why? Should it be transferred to another agency? Why? Is such a transfer in the works?

Assistance staff, management, and training

Can you provide an organizational chart for the assistance program? What qualifications are required for hiring? How many VOCA assistance staff members are there, in FTEs? Are they dedicated to the VOCA assistance program, or is their time shared with other programs housed within this agency (such as VAWA)?

How often is each kind of assistance staff training reported in the national survey provided? How do you assess the effectiveness of the training? *Get copies of training materials.*

How are staff performance evaluations done? How is excellence recognized and rewarded? Awards for handling high caseloads? Any formal system to track how well

Interview Questions: VOCA Victim Advocates
REVISED 1/10/00

individual staff handle their cases? What's the staff turnover rate? How is staff management and morale addressed – regular meetings, case conferences, etc.?

Oversight and feedback

Is there an advisory board for the VOCA assistance program? If so, who is on it? Any victims? How are advisory board members selected? What is their role? How often do they meet? Have any changes based on the board's recommendations been made? What changes? If there are no victims on the advisory board, does the board seek their input in some fashion? How?

Financial management

How has the FY 1997 guideline which allows you the year of award plus three years to obligate funds impacted on financial management? Explore reasons why states did not make full use of the administrative allowance. How else would you like to respond to your current funding situation – use funds for different types of programs, different types of program activities, different types of victims?

How are funds disbursed to grantees – reimbursement basis, monthly installments? How does this impact on subrecipient program functioning? How are subrecipients' expenditures and disbursements tracked? How are audits done, and how often?

II. Planning and Coordination

Planning process

How does the strategic planning and needs assessment process function? How often? What types of victims have been included and what types excluded? What priorities have been set? What issues have not been prioritized, and should they be addressed in the future?

Coordination issues

How are compensation and assistance activities coordinated, and what coordination mechanisms are most useful? What are the obstacles to coordination? How are these tackled and with what success? What problems do service providers face in meeting their obligation to refer victims to compensation, and how are these problems addressed? What more should be done?

Interview Questions: VOCA Victim Advocates
REVISED 1/10/00

Please expand on how the assistance program is coordinated with other victim services funded by the federal government (e.g., VAWA, CDC, HHS, etc.) and by the state. What are the challenges to coordination? How are other funding streams tracked? How are funding decisions influenced by the activities of other victim service funding streams? Who should administer emergency funds?

Do you communicate with victim/witness programs in FBI field offices, US Attorneys' offices, and military installations? How often? For what purposes? What has come of these efforts? What obstacles arise for your program in serving federal crime victims, and for the federal victim/witness programs and their victims in accessing assistance services?

Do you coordinate with groups that serve the interests of special populations of victims, such as Native Americans, victims of hate crimes, elderly victims, rural victims, etc.? How? For what purposes? What has come of these efforts?

Do you coordinate with non-VOCA funded groups that come in contact with victims (e.g. churches, schools)? How? For what purposes? What has come of these efforts?

Do you have a crisis response plan in the event of mass violence or terrorism? Is it a coordinated effort? With whom? Have you ever had to use it? With what result?

III. Subgrant Funding and Service Provision

Outreach to service providers

What support do you provide during the application process?

Do you provide training to groups not funded by VOCA assistance funds that routinely come in contact with victims to help them inform victims about assistance-funded services? If so, describe.

Funding requirements

Please elaborate on any requirements for successful applications which go beyond the federal requirements. How are these requirements useful to the state's program and the service provider? Do any of them present obstacles for providers, and how are these obstacles addressed?

Funding decisions

Interview Questions: VOCA Victim Advocates
REVISED 1/10/00

Please discuss the criteria you use to select among qualified applicants when funding is insufficient to make full awards to all applicants. Does your state prioritize giving all qualified applicants at least some funding, or selecting the best among them for full funding? How do you identify the “best”? How many awards did your state make in the last fiscal year for which all funds have been obligated, and what was the average amount and the smallest and largest of these awards? What is the goal of your state’s subrecipient selection strategy, and how well does it work?

Your state awarded (*percentage*) of funds to nonprofits, which is (*higher than average, lower than average, about average – as appropriate*) for the nation. How was this division between the private and public sector reached? Do you think it’s what’s right for your state, or should the balance be changed? What’s being done to effect any changes needed?

(*For states with tribal groups*) You (*have/have not*) made any awards to the Native American groups within your state. If you have, what are these awards for and what special issues of the population are being addressed? If you have not, why not? How does the presence or absence of assistance awards to tribal groups interact with the presence or absence of VAIC awards to tribes within your state? Explore the discrepancy between the Native American population and the funding of Native American groups.

How are subrecipient award decisions reached? What are the benefits and drawbacks of the decision-making process? How does the appeals process work? How many decisions are generally appealed, and with what results?

The federal guidelines on funding distribution specify that domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and underserved service programs must each receive at least 10% of funds. In your state there seems to be an emphasis on (*one of these, as appropriate*), since that area seems to receive a very large amount of the funds. (*Or a lack of emphasis on one of the areas, as appropriate*). Why does your state’s portfolio look like this? What are the benefits and drawbacks of this funding strategy? How should it change in the future, if it should change?

How do you weigh the competing demands to continue funding good programs versus funding new and innovative programs that seem promising? What sorts of innovative programs are you particularly interested in funding? Describe any innovative programs you have funded, what made them unique, and what worked, what didn’t, and why. Why are there so few VOCA programs in public housing projects? (*as appropriate for the site*)

Interview Questions: VOCA Victim Advocates
REVISED 1/10/00

Service provider standards and monitoring

Are there any state standards establishing minimal requirements for VOCA service providers? What are they? What level of staff are included? How were the standards set? How are they enforced? Do you use NOVA standards to assess VOCA funded programs?

How are program goals operationalized? What type (if any) performance measures are used? Do they include feedback from clients served?

Please describe the support services you provide to subrecipients during the grant period, such as technical assistance from project monitors, conferences, other training opportunities, etc. What seems to work the best?

Describe monitoring system (who does it, caseloads per staff, on-site monitoring, phone, mission/philosophy of monitoring function, program review, requirements of grantees for submitting documentation, oversight). How do states monitor the requirement that assistance programs refer victims to the compensation program?

What is the penalty for contractual non-compliance? What guidance is given to grantees to help them improve their services? How does state ensure that subgrantees are properly using VOCA funds?

What guidance is provided subgrantees about the type of records they need to keep and suggestions for improving their record keeping?

Underserved populations and unmet needs

How does your state define underserved populations? Which populations have been identified as underserved (e.g., victims of certain types of crimes such as hate crimes, or victims with certain characteristics, such as non-English speaking, elderly, Native American, etc.)? Why have they been underserved? What efforts are being made to reach them? What special issues do each of these populations present?

What service needs (for any type of victim) are not being addressed by VOCA-funded assistance programs that you think should be? Why have they not been addressed, and what's being done about meeting them?

How does your state define workplace violence? Is any data collected on workplace violence? Describe any special initiatives relating to workplace violence.

Interview Questions: VOCA Victim Advocates
REVISED 1/10/00

IV. Interactions with the Federal Government

What have been your experiences with federal resources, such as TTAC, online resources, and your OVC project monitor? What additional support would you like to have from OVC?

According to the survey results, your state sent ___ staff members to the National Assistance Academy. Did they find it useful?

What changes would you like to see in federal guidelines, including the use of administrative and training funds, matching requirements, and allowable activities for subrecipients? How would you like to see the federal reporting forms changed? What forms or procedures are particularly problematic for you or for your subrecipients?

Interview Questions: VOCA Victim Advocates
REVISED 1/10/00

VICTIM ADVOCATE SITE VISIT INTERVIEW GUIDE

DESCRIPTION OF ADVOCACY PROGRAM AND VICTIM RIGHTS

- What types of service programs and/or victims does your group represent?
- What types of services and advocacy do you offer?
- How long has your group been in existence? Have your goals and activities changed over time? In what ways? Is your sole mission focused on crime victims and/or victim service programs, or is that just part of what you do? What else do you do?
- How is your group funded? Do you receive any VOCA funds? If yes, what are they used for? How long have you been funded by VOCA? What is your opinion of the funding process from the standpoint of a grantee how streamlined was the process used to get VOCA funding; how easy is it to comply with reporting and other requirements; how helpful are state VOCA staff when you have questions?
- What legal rights do victims have in your state? What other rights should be legally protected and how? How well are current rights enforced in the justice system? Where are the gaps in enforcement, and how can these gaps be closed?
- How does your program define workplace violence? Are any data collected on workplace violence? Describe any special initiatives relating to workplace violence.

FEEDBACK ON THE STATE'S COMPENSATION PROGRAM

How well is the compensation program meeting the needs of the victims you represent?

- How do compensation eligibility requirements - reporting requirements, types of losses covered, types of crimes covered, definitions of contributory misconduct, payment caps, time limitations, need to document amount of losses, etc. impact on the ability of victims to be compensated in a timely and useful manner? What is the impact of insurance claim requirements on victims seeking compensation? Should any of the requirements be changed? How? What causes delays in the compensation process and how could they be addressed?
- How useable, to victims, is the process of applying and providing documentation for compensation? In what ways does the application process discourage victims from applying for compensation? How could it be improved? How do the state compensation program or VOCA-funded assistance providers help victims in the application process? How could this assistance be improved?
- How well is your state's compensation program known among victims? What types of victims are less likely to know about the funds? How can the state better reach them? Does the state provide training to victim service providers, law enforcement, prosecutors, or others who make direct contact with victims, and how could the training be expanded or improved?

Interview Questions: VOCA Victim Advocates
REVISED 1/10/00

- Do you do any outreach to your constituency (i.e., service providers and/or victims) to inform them about compensation or help them through the application process? How can your group better reach and assist the unserved and underserved, and what's needed to make this happen?
- Are claims determinations generally fair and reasonable? Is there a useful appeals process? Are funds reaching the victims who need them? Who benefits the most? Who is left out? Why are funds not getting to victims who need them? What needs to be done to reach these victims?
- Overall, how would you rate your state's compensation program? What is working well? What needs improvement? Are you involved in any efforts to effect improvements? Please describe.

FEEDBACK ON THE STATE'S VOCA-FUNDED ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

How well are the victim service programs funded with VOCA funds meeting the needs of the victims you represent?

- What are your opinions on federal program eligibility requirements for VOCA assistance funds, including the requirement that 10% of funds go to domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and underserved victims (each); the reporting requirement and the form used in reporting (the Subgrant Award Report); the requirement that service providers refer/assist victims with compensation; the 20% funding match requirement; the requirement for use of volunteers; the requirement to promote public and private efforts to aid crime victims within the communities served; the list of activities ineligible for VOCA funding (such as prevention, perpetrator rehabilitation, program administration, etc.); and other requirements? What additional requirements does the state place on applicants? How are the federal and state requirements put into practice and where do problems arise? How should federal or state requirements be modified?
- How well are the VOCA (compensation and assistance), VAWA, CDC, and other funding sources coordinated at the state level? How does the level of coordination affect your constituency programs? Can you describe the state planning and coordination mechanisms (are you consulted or directly involved)? Do the planning/coordination efforts set reasonable and fair funding priorities, and what are the priorities? How well does the state VOCA assistance program respond to drastic fluctuations in federal VOCA funding from one year to another?

Interview Questions: VOCA Victim Advocates
REVISED 1/10/00

- How helpful is the state assistance administrator to local providers during the subgrant application process and during the grant period (for successful applicants)? What services does the state provide to assist providers with the application process, during the program implementation period, and in complying with federal and state requirements? Does the state provide useful conferences or other training opportunities? What more should the state do?
- How useable is the grant application process for local programs seeking VOCA funding? In what ways does the application process discourage programs from applying for VOCA funds? How competitive is it? How do you help your constituency programs prepare grant applications for VOCA funding? How could the grant application process be improved?
- How fair and reasonable are the state's subgrant funding decisions? Are the "right" types of victim service programs being funded with VOCA? Are the "best" programs being funded? What types of victims and services are left out and why? What can be done to increase the chances that good programs providing needed and useful services are funded?
- To what extent have programs that receive funds through VOCA been able to institutionalize the services provided in lean years when VOCA funding is scarce? How has this been accomplished? What impact does a drastic influx of funds in a given year have on your constituent programs?
- Are the services funded through VOCA reaching the victims who need them? Who benefits the most? Who is left out? Why are services not getting to victims who need them? What can be done to reach victims who are underserved and unserved? How useful to victims are the types of services provided and the way in which they are provided, and what can be done to improve services?
- Overall, how would you rate the way your state runs the VOCA assistance program? What is working well? What needs improvement? Are you involved in any efforts to effect improvements? Please describe.

Is there anything we have not discussed that is important for us to know about the state's VOCA-funded compensation or assistance program?

Appendix C

Community-level Site Visit Interview Guidelines

Selection of Program Sites

Local program sites will be selected from lists of recent subrecipients and in consultation with the state administrators from the 6 case study states. Three providers will be selected in each of the six case study states. Several criteria will guide selection of the sites:

1. *Program characteristics:*

- We will track the distribution of VOCA funds across type of crime (DV/SA/CA/other) and the distribution of funds to public agencies vs. non-profits in our sampling.
- We will also sample for variance on geographic location and special populations served by the programs.

2. *Program status:*

- Selected sites will be well-established programs that are in good standing with state VOCA programmatic and fiscal requirements.

3. *Program size and cooperation:*

- Selected program sites must have caseloads sufficiently large to support victim sampling for focus groups and/or phone surveys.
- Program sites must agree to cooperate with all aspects of the evaluation. Before selecting a program for inclusion in the research we must confirm that it can provide us with access to a sufficiently large sample of clients for focus groups and/or phone surveys, and a staff member is available to serve as our Site Evaluation Coordinator (SEC). Focus groups will be held during our site visits so all logistics and participants must be arranged in advance.

Materials for Program Administrators

Participating program directors will be provided the following packet of materials in advance of the visit:

- **Confirmation letter**
- **Agenda for the visit**
- **List of topics for administrator interviews, focus groups (where applicable), and phone surveys**
- **Description of the evaluation project including how victims will be selected for the phone interviews and/or focus groups, and**
- **List of materials to compile for UI staff (program brochures, annual reports, local evaluation reports)**

Materials for Evaluation staff

- **Background information and site visit reports from the state administrator**
- **VOCA award information (years, amounts, purposes, etc.)**
- **Any available website information**

Service Provider Site Visit Questions

A. Description of Victim Service Program

Program Mission, Services, and Community Coordination

- 1. How long has your victim service program been in existence? What is the program's primary mission? What is the mission of the organization your program is located in (if applicable)? How prominent a part of the larger organization is your program, in terms of staffing, funding, visibility, etc.?**
- 2. What victim populations does your group serve (by type of crime, by victim demos, by geographic location)?**
- 3. What types of services and advocacy do you provide? When do you generally begin working with victims, and when do your services generally end? For how long are cases typically active? How many different types of services do clients typically receive? How do you know when a client has completed his or her course of service?**
- 4. If the service program is part of a criminal justice agency, is the service program mandated by state law or the state constitution? As of what date? What program functions are mandated in the law? What state funding is provided by law?**
- 5. If your program is a private non-profit, do you interact with justice agencies? Which ones? What types of personnel within each type of agency? What types of functions does your program perform in conjunction with justice system personnel?**
- 6. How does your program coordinate with other programs within the community to serve crime victims?**

Program Structure & Staffing

- 7. Describe how your program and the larger organization within which the victim service program is located (if applicable) are organized. Who do you and your staff report to?**
- 8. What qualifications are required of direct service staff (both paid and volunteer)? Is personal victimization experience considered in the hiring process? Do you try to hire victims? Do you try not to hire recent victims? Are many of the current staff former victims?**
- 9. How long has the program's director been in his or her position? Tenure of other key staff? How are your program's turnover rates? Any problems with staff burnout, low morale?**
- 10. What sorts of training do staff receive? Are other non-victim-service-providers in your agency (e.g., line officers, ADA's) also trained in victim issues?**
- 11. What topics are covered? How often are training sessions provided and who sponsors the training (i.e., the state VOCA assistance administrator, the state comp program, the state**

**VAWA administrator, advocacy groups, national resources like NOVA and the NVAA, etc.)?
What is the profession of the actual trainers?**

12. Describe any unmet staffing needs. How can these needs best be met?

Program Funding

13. What was your program's total operating budget for 1999? How much was your VOCA award? What other funding sources are used to support program activities?

14. What program activities do VOCA funds support? What kinds of activities do other funds support?

15. Do you have a person on staff who does fundraising? Does the VOCA administrator help you find other funding sources?

16. Do you charge for services? If so, how does that work?

Relationships with other Programs and Networks

17. What is your program's relationship with state advocacy networks/coalitions? Do you receive funding through a network? What about training, assistance with reporting requirements, service standards or guidelines, etc.? How do these relationships work? How would you like to improve them?

18. What is your program's relationship with criminal justice and other victim advocacy programs in the community? Where are relationships strong and where are they weak? How would you like to improve these relationships?

B. Feedback on the State and Federal VOCA Assistance Programs

State Application & Funding Process

19. How long have you been funded by VOCA? How did you first learn about VOCA funds? What do you think of the application and funding process from the perspective of a grantee? In what ways does the application process encourage or discourage programs from applying for funds? How competitive is the process? How could the grant application process be improved?

20. How helpful is the state assistance administrator to local providers during the subgrant application process and the grant period? What services does the state provide to assist applicants during the application process and during the term of the award (e.g., training opportunities, conferences, technical assistance, etc.)? What else should the state do to assist applicants and subrecipients?

21. Are you aware of how the state makes funding decisions and what other programs receive funding? If so, how fair and reasonable are the state's subgrant funding decisions?

22. What are your experiences with monitoring by the state VOCA administrator?
23. Are the services funded through VOCA reaching the victims who need them? How useful are the types of services provided and the way in which they are provided, and what can be done to improve services?
24. Who benefits the most? Who is left out? Why are services not getting to victims who need them?
25. What can be done to reach victim groups who are underserved or unserved? Who are these victims? Why are they underserved? Are there issues around cultural competence in the types of services or the way they're provided?
26. Overall, how would you rate the way the your state runs the VOCA assistance program? What is working well? What need improvement? Are you involved in any efforts to effect improvements?

Planning & Coordination by the State

27. How well are VOCA (compensation and assistance), VAWA, FVPSA, PHHS, Byrne, state funds, and other funding sources coordinated at the state level?
28. Are service providers consulted or directly involved in state planning and coordination efforts? How does the level of coordination at the state level affect your program?
29. How well does the state VOCA assistance program respond to drastic fluctuations in federal VOCA funding from year to year? Do you have ideas on how the state could better respond to funding fluctuations?
30. How have these funding fluctuations affected your program? How has your organization dealt with either a shortage or influx of VOCA funding? What are the challenges?

Federal and State VOCA Regulations and Resources

31. What are your opinions on federal program requirements for VOCA assistance funds including:
 - 10 percent of funds must go to each of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and underserved victims.
 - Funds are restricted to direct service activities and may not be used for related activities such as prevention efforts, perpetrator treatment, or program administration.
 - Subrecipients must refer or assist victims with compensation.
 - Subrecipients must provide a 20% non-federal match.
 - Subrecipients must utilize volunteers.
 - Other requirements?
32. What additional requirements does the state place on grantees? What do you think of them?

33. **Have you used any federal resources, such as the National Victim Assistance Academy or OVC's Resource Center? Do you or can you use VOCA funds to send staff to the NVAA? What did you think of the federal resources? What other resources should be available from the feds?**
34. **How should state and/or federal requirements be modified? The Subgrant Award Report (SAR)?**

C. Victims' Rights

35. **What legal rights do victims have in your state?**
36. **How well are these rights enforced? What are the gaps in enforcement and how can these gaps be closed?**
37. **What other rights should be legally protected and how?**

D. Feedback on the State Compensation Program

Assistance with Compensation

38. **Are staff knowledgeable of state compensation requirements?**
39. **How does your organization meet victims' needs for compensation information and assistance? Do any of your standard written forms or materials (such as client intake interviews) include specific mention of compensation? Do staff routinely ask victims about their financial losses and inform them of the availability of compensation benefits? Do staff help victims fill out compensation forms? Do staff follow-up with compensation program on behalf of victims?**
40. **Does your state compensation office have a victim assistance person(s) on staff? Does your staff know this person?**
41. **What kind of interaction, if any, does your organization have with the state compensation program?**

Assessment of the Compensation Claim Process

42. **How do the state's compensation eligibility requirements (including type of crime and type of expenses), reporting requirements, payment caps, and filing deadlines impact the ability of victims to be compensated in a timely and useful manner?**
43. **Does the state comp program regularly send you brochures, forms, etc.? Overall how accessible are the processes of applying and providing verification/documentation for compensation? In what ways do the application and verification/documentation processes discourage victims from applying for compensation? How could they be improved?**

44. What issues cause delays in the compensation process and how could they be addressed?

45. Are claims determinations generally timely, fair, and reasonable? Is there a useful appeals process?

Outreach to Victims

46. How well is your state's compensation program known among victims?

47. What types of victims are less likely to know about the compensation benefits? How can the state better reach them?

48. Do you do any outreach to victims to inform them about compensation benefits? How can your organization better reach and assist underserved and unserved victims to tell them about the availability of compensation benefits?

49. Does the state provide any training to victim service providers, law enforcement, prosecutors or others who make direct contact with victims? If so and you're familiar with the training, how useful was the training and how could it be expanded or improved?

Overall Impressions of the State Compensation Program

50. Overall, how would you rate your state's compensation program?

51. What is working well and what needs to be improved? Are you involved in any efforts to effect improvements?

Appendix D

Focus Group Guidelines

Running the Focus Group

First names only (not necessarily real ones) will be used during the focus groups. Ground rules will be: (1) the group will meet for 1.5-2 hours maximum; (2) everyone will have the chance to talk and it is the facilitator's job to ensure that happens; and (3) participants need to respect each other's privacy and not repeat what they heard during the group.

Analyzing the Data

We will prepare summaries of each of the focus groups without using actual names or identifiers of the participants. Qualitative analysis will be conducted that concentrates on common themes from among those in the focus groups. Direct quotes from participants and case scenarios will be prepared to illustrate themes, again without actual names or identifiers of the participants.

Maintaining Confidential Records

We will take several steps to protect the information collected in the focus groups. These include:

- Only key project staff will have access to notes. Only pseudonyms will be in the notes.
- Summaries of focus group meetings and project reports will *not* include the names of any of the participants.

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

Focus groups are intended to be interactive and draw upon the unique experiences of the participants. We are planning to conduct a focus group of 6-8 victims who received services from victim assistance programs funded through VOCA. Given the dynamic nature of focus groups, the following questions are intended only as a guide and not a structured questionnaire.

Experiences With the Victim Service Agency

- How did they learn about services offered by the VOCA-funded service agency—through the police or prosecutor, the state's compensation program, media outreach, direct contact from the service agency, through a friend or family, or by other means? How soon after the crime did they learn of the program? How easy was it to access the program's services? What barriers arose?
- What types of services were provided by the VOCA-funded service agency?
 - What was done to identify their needs?
 - What type of help did they need?
 - What type of help did they get? How well did it match their needs?
 - For how long did they get help? When did they start? When and why did they stop?
 - Do they think the services they received helped them? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?
 - Were they satisfied with the people who provided the services? With the services and resources available? With how the services are given (e.g., cultural competence, accessibility, respect for their autonomy and privacy, etc.)? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?

- What types of services did they want that they did not receive? Why were they unable to get these services (e.g., none available in the community; could not afford services; did not have transportation to get services; could not get off work to go to services)? What difference has it made to them that they did not receive these services?
- What other victim service programs have they worked with? What type of help did they get from these programs? How helpful were these services? How well did the different programs they were working with work with each other?
- Did someone from the service agency follow up with them after they stopped receiving services to see how they were doing? If so...
 - Who in the service agency contacted them (e.g., a counselor, a volunteer or some one else)?
 - How soon after they stopped received services were they contacted? How did they contact them (e.g., by phone, letter, in-person)?
 - What did they ask about (e.g., how the victim was feeling, whether they needed additional services, whether they followed up with referrals made to other agencies that could help them)?
 - Were they glad the service provider followed up? What other type of follow up by the service provider would they have liked to have happened?
 - If the service provider did not follow up—do they think they should have? What other type of follow up by the service provider would they have liked to have happened?
- Do they know about victims’ compensation? How and when did they find out? Did they apply for compensation? Who helped them with the claim form or other application requirements? What other help did they need? What did they think of the claim process? Of the decision reached in their case?

Appendix E

Victim Compensation Claimant Survey

Contact Log:

<i>Contact Attempt</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Day of wk</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Interviewer</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
<i>Attempt #1</i>					
<i>Attempt #2</i>					
<i>Attempt #3</i>					
<i>Attempt #4</i>					
<i>Attempt #5</i>					

Interview start time: _____ Stop time: _____ Length: _____ minutes

Interviewer Note: We are interviewing the claimant, who may or may not also be the direct or primary victim of the crime. Do not interview anyone under the age of 18. When the victim is underage, the claimant is likely to be a parent, guardian, or other person of legal age. Verify the claimant's majority status below.

Name of claimant _____ Phone # _____(home)
 _____(work)
 Check if claimant is 18 or older: _____ DO NOT INTERVIEW IF UNDER 18

Interviewer Note: Use the information listed below for the questions or statements in boldface. This information is from the state's compensation database. Only ask the claimant for information NOT available from the database.

Page 2: Crime Type: _____
Crime Date: _____
Claim #: _____
State: _____
Primary Victim: Yes _____ No _____ (Question 1)
Relationship: _____ (Question 1a)
Page 5: Date Filed: _____ (After Question 7)
Page 9: Date Determined: _____ (After Question 14)
Expenses Paid: Yes _____ No _____ (Question 15)
All Paid: Yes _____ No _____ (Question 15a)
Page 16: Claimant DOB: _____ (Question 37)
Victim DOB: _____ (Question 38)
Claimant Sex: Male _____ Female _____ (Question 39)
Page 17: Victim Sex: Male _____ Female _____ (Question 40)
Claimant Race: _____ (Question 41)
Victim Race: _____ (Question 42)
Claimant Income: _____ (Question 43)
Page 18: Victim Income: _____ (Question 44)

Please refer to the VOCA Compensation Client Telephone Survey Recruitment and Consent Script for the introduction to the telephone survey.

{Note to interviewer: fill in these blanks based on the information contained on the coversheet.}
First, we have a couple of questions to ask about the crime for which you requested compensation. This is the _____ <type of crime> which occurred on _____ <date of crime>.

Comp claim # _____ State _____

{Note to interviewer: complete #1 and #1a based on the information contained on the coversheet. Only ask if not on the coversheet.}

N=452

Of the total 452 cases, 212 (47%) were paid a total of \$329,230, at an average of \$1553, a median of \$639, and a range of \$14 to \$22,923.

1. Are you the direct or primary victim of this crime? *(don't ask for homicides!!)*

- (1) Yes *(Skip to Question #2)* 61% (274/452)
(2) No 39% (178/452)

1a. (If no,) what is your relationship to the direct or primary victim?

(N=178)

- (1) Spouse/Significant Other 3% (5/178)
(2) Parent/step parent/guardian 81% (144/178)
(3) Grandparent 4% (7/178)
(4) Sibling 5% (8/178)
(5) Other family member *(please specify)* 6% (11/178)
(6) Other *(please specify)* _____ 1% (1/178)
(9) Don't Know (0/178)

2. Was a weapon used or threatened to be used during the crime?

- (1) Yes 30% (137/452)
(2) No *(Skip to Question #3)* 65% (293/452)
(9) Don't Know *(Skip to Question #3)* 5% (22/452)

2a. (If yes,) what type of weapon?

(N=137)

- (1) gun 43% (59/137)
(2) knife, razor, or other cutting instrument 32% (44/137)
(3) other: bat, other wood object, tool, bottle, glass, metal object 26% (36/137)

(9) *Don't Know* 1% (1/137)

3. Did the crime occur at the place where you (*or* the victim) work(s)?

- (1) Yes 8% (35/452)
(2) No 92% (416/452)
(9) *Don't Know* <1% (1/452)

4. Did you (*or* the victim) know the person who committed the crime?

- (1) Yes 65% (293/452)
(2) No (*Skip to Question #5*) 33% (149/452)
(9) *Don't Know (Skip to Question #5)* 2% (10/452)

4a. How did you (*or* the victim) know him/her? (*Check ALL that apply*)

(N=293)

- (1) spouse 11% (31/293)
(2) ex-spouse 1% (4/293)
(3) boyfriend/girlfriend 9% (26/293)
(4) ex-boyfriend/ex-girlfriend 6% (17/293)
(5) immediate family member: (Please Specify) 10% (30/293)
(6) extended family member: (Please Specify) 7% (20/293)
(7) friend 15% (45/293)
(8) neighbor, schoolmate, co-worker 12% (34/293)
(9) acquaintance 23% (68/293)
(10) other: (Please Specify) _____ 6% (17/293)
(11) *Do not know or skipped or refused* 2% (7/293)

5. Was this your first claim for victim compensation?

- (1) Yes (*Skip to Question #6*) 96% (433/452)
(2) No 4% (16/452)

5a. (If no,) how many previous claims have you made?

(N=16)

All 16 reported 1 previous claim.

Let's talk about how you found out about the compensation program.

6. Who told you about the compensation program? (*Check all that apply*)

- (1) victim advocate/hotline operator 33% (150/452)
(2) friend/relative 9% (40/452)
(3) hospital, doctor, nurse, or other healthcare provider 8% (36/452)
(4) judge/clerk 3% (13/452)
(5) learned on own from public education poster, phone book, Internet, etc. 2% (9/452)

- (6) police 23% (102/452)
- (7) probation 1% (5/452)
- (8) prosecutor 14% (62/452)
- (9) counselor 2% (10/452)
- (10) letter 2% (7/452)
- (99) *Don't Know* 5% (21/452)
- (11) someone else—(Who?) _____ 9% (40/452)

7. Did you know about the compensation program before the crime?

- (1) Yes (*Skip to Question #8*) 12% (54/452)
- (2) No 88% (396/452)
- (9) *Don't Know (Skip to Question #8)* <1% (1/452)

7a. (If no,) when did you first learn about it? (*Read responses and check only one*)

(N=396)

- (1) the day/night the crime was committed (*Skip to Question #8*)
13% (51/396)
- (2) within a week after the crime (*Skip to Question #8*)
40% (158/396)
- (3) within a month (two to four weeks) after the crime (*Skip to Question #8*)
22% (85/396)
- (4) more than a month (more than four weeks) but less than six months after the crime
14% (54/396)
- (5) six to twelve months after the crime
7% (26/396)
- (6) more than a year after the crime
4% (15/396)
- (9) *Don't Know (Skip to Question #8)*
2% (7/396)

7b. Did the delay in hearing about it cause you problems in filing your claim?

(N=95) (those who learned of comp more than a month after the crime)

- (1) Yes 14% (13/95)
- (2) No (*Skip to Question #8*) 84% (80/95)
- (9) *Don't Know (Skip to Question #8)* 2% (2/95)

7c. What problems? (N=13)

- (1) problems with getting paperwork together 23% (3/13)
- (2) trouble meeting filing deadlines 69% (9/13)
- (3) other reason(s)⇒ (Please Specify) _____ 15% (2/13)

{Note to interviewer: fill in this blank based on the information contained on the coversheet.}

Let's turn now to the claim you filed with the compensation program on _____
<date claim was filed>.

8. Did anyone help you apply for compensation?

- (1) Yes 50% (225/452)
- (2) No (Skip to Question #9) 47% (212/452)
- (9) Don't Know (Skip to Question #9) 3% (13/452)

8a. Who helped you? (Check all that apply)

(N=225)

- (1) attorney I hired 2% (4/225)
- (2) compensation program staff 11% (25/225)
- (3) friend/relative 17% (39/225)
- (4) hospital, doctor, nurse, or other healthcare provider 8% (17/225)
- (5) judge (0/225)
- (6) police 10% (22/225)
- (7) probation 1% (3/225)

- (8) prosecutor 9% (20/225)
- (9) victim advocate 41% (92/225)
- (10) counselor/therapist 3% (12/225)
- (11) someone else—(Who?) _____ 6% (14/225)
- (99) Don't Know 1% (2/225)

8b. How did those people help you? (Check all that apply and read responses if needed as a prompt)

(N=225)

- (1) giving you a compensation **application form** to fill out 40% (91/225)
- (2) **explaining** the compensation program to you 51% (114/225)
- (3) helping you **fill out** the compensation application 64% (145/225)
- (4) giving you a **pamphlet or brochure** that explained the comp program 8% (19/225)
- (5) helping you **get the paperwork** required in the claim 25% (57/225)
- (6) helping you in any other way(s)⇒(how?) _____ 10% (23/225)
- (9) Don't Know 1% (2/225)

9. Was there help you wanted in completing your application that you did not get?

- (1) Yes **9% (39/452)**
- (2) No (*Skip to Question #10*) **88% (397/452)**
- (9) *Don't Know*(*Skip to Question #10*) **3% (15/452)**

9a. What type(s) of help did you want? (*Check all that apply*)

(N=39)

- (1) someone to help fill out the form **26% (10/39)**
- (2) someone to explain the program **59% (23/39)**
- (3) someone to help gather the needed paperwork **18% (7/39)**
- (4) other⇒ (Please Specify) _____ **18% (7/39)**
- (5) *Do not know or skipped question* **5% (2/39)**

Let's talk about the processing of your claim.

10. What paperwork did you first send in with your application? (*Check all that apply*)

- (1) birth certificates for children **1% (5/451)**
- (2) death certificate **4% (19/451)**
- (3) doctors' certificate of disability or medical treatment **6% (26/451)**
- (4) insurance benefits statements (e.g., health insurance, life insurance, car insurance, homeowners' or renters' insurance, etc.) **3% (15/451)**
- (5) police report **16% (72/451)**
- (6) proof of expenses (e.g., providers' bills) **27% (121/451)**
- (7) proof of income (e.g., pay stubs, tax returns, etc.) **4% (19/451)**
- (8) proof of payments you made (e.g., receipts, canceled checks) **9% (41/451)**
- (9) statements of other benefits (e.g., unemployment, Social Security, worker's compensation, disability, etc.) **2% (9/451)**
- (10) other: (Please Specify) _____ **7% (32/451)**
- (11) none **19% (85/451)**
- (99) *Don't Know*

32% (145/451)

11. Did the program ask you to send in more information?

- (1) Yes 30% (134/451)
- (2) No (*Skip to Question #12*) 61% (277/451)
- (9) *Don't Know*(*Skip to Question #12*) 9% (40/451)

11a. What additional information did they want? (*Check all that apply*)

(N=134)

- (1) additional information I could provide without sending in more paperwork
5% (7/134)
- (2) additional signatures or notarizations
3% (4/134)
- (3) paperwork that I had to provide:
70% (94/134)
- (4) birth certificates for children
1% (1/94)
- (5) death certificate
1% (1/94)
- (6) doctors' certificate of disability or medical treatment
14% (13/94)
- (7) insurance benefits statements (e.g., health insurance, life insurance, car insurance, homeowners' or renters' insurance, etc.)
18% (17/94)
- (8) police report
16% (15/94)
- (9) proof of expenses (e.g., providers' bills)
48% (45/94)
- (10) proof of income (e.g., pay stubs, tax returns, etc.)
13% (12/94)
- (11) proof of payments you made (e.g., receipts, canceled checks)
15% (14/94)
- (12) statements of other benefits (e.g., unemployment, Social Security, worker's compensation, disability, etc.)
2% (2/94)
- (13) other: (Please Specify) _____
15% (20/134)
- (99) *Don't know* (*Skip to Question #12*)
9% (12/134)

11b. Were you able to give it to them?

(N=122)

- (1) yes, all (*Skip to Question #12*) 76% (93/122)
- (2) yes, some 4% (5/122)
- (3) no, none 20% (24/122)

11c. Why were you not able to provide all the requested information? (*Read responses and check all that apply*)

(N=29)

- (1) too much trouble/not worth it 21% (6/29)
- (2) not able to get the requested information 52% (15/29)
- (3) other reason: (Please Specify) _____ 28% (8/29)
- (9) Don't Know 3% (1/29)

Now let's talk about the expenses caused by the crime.

12. Now I am going to read you a list of expenses that may or may not apply to your situation. I have to read the entire list to make sure that we don't miss anything. Please let me know which expenses you have had? (*Read responses and check all*)

	<i>Had this expense:</i>		<i>12a. (If had expense, did you request compensation for this expense?)</i>	
	1. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2. <input type="checkbox"/> No	1. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2. <input type="checkbox"/> No
(1) medical treatment	69% (310/450)	31%	70% (217/309)	28%
(2) dental treatment	9% (40/449)	90%	73% (23/40)	25%
(3) mental health counseling	49% (222/449)	51%	77% (170/222)	22%
(4) rehabilitation services	11% (49/449)	89%	45% (22/49)	47%
(5) transportation expenses	40% (179/449)	60%	41% (74/179)	53%
(6) funeral expenses	10% (46/449)	90%	80% (37/46)	13%
(7) lost wages (when you/the victim couldn't work)	44% (196/449)	56%	57% (111/196)	41%
(8) loss of support (when someone whose income the victim depended upon dies)	8% (34/449)	92%	17% (6/34)	71%
(9) crime scene clean up	6% (26/449)	94%	27% (7/26)	73%
(10) moving or relocation expenses	14% (64/448)	86%	13% (8/64)	88%
(11) replacement services (such as				

caring for an elderly parent or children previously done by you/the victim)	1. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2. <input type="checkbox"/> No	1. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2. <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	4% (17/448)	96%	24% (4/17)	77%	
(12) attorney's fees	1. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2. <input type="checkbox"/> No	1. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2. <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	12% (53/448)	88%	21% (11/53)	76%	
(13) stolen cash or checks	1. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2. <input type="checkbox"/> No	1. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2. <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	15% (68/448)	85%	63% (43/68)	37%	
(14) other property loss or replacement	1. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2. <input type="checkbox"/> No	1. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2. <input type="checkbox"/> No	1. <input type="checkbox"/>
Yes 2. <input type="checkbox"/> No	27% (119/448)	74%	49% (58/116)	50%	
(15) other. (What?) _____			1. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	2. <input type="checkbox"/> No	1. <input type="checkbox"/>
Yes 2. <input type="checkbox"/> No	7% (30/448)	92%	37% (11/30)	43%	

13. Approximately, how much money have you had to pay from your own pocket without being paid back by compensation, restitution, insurance (health, life, car, homeowners, renters, etc.), or other sources? \$ _____ *(accept a range or ballpark estimate.)*

(N=310, which is 69% of 452)

Range: \$5 to \$700,000

Median: \$600

Mean: \$5,762

2 outliers: \$100,000 and \$700,000

N=121 had no unrecouped expenditures (27% of 452)

Check here if still waiting to hear about expenses submitted to insurance or if restitution is pending, etc.

5% (22/446)

Skip to Question #15 if the amount in Question 13 is zero.

14. What were these expenses?

(N=325)

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> medical | 36% (116/325) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> dental | 4% (12/325) |
| (3) <input type="checkbox"/> mental health counseling | 16% (51/325) |
| (4) <input type="checkbox"/> rehabilitation services | 3% (8/325) |
| (5) <input type="checkbox"/> transportation expenses | 27% (87/325) |
| (6) <input type="checkbox"/> funeral expenses | 7% (23/325) |
| (7) <input type="checkbox"/> lost wages (when the victim couldn't work) | |

- 23% (74/325)**
- (8) loss of support (when someone whose income the victim depended upon dies) **3% (10/325)**
- (9) crime scene clean up **3% (8/325)**
- (10) moving or relocation expenses **11% (35/325)**
- (11) replacement services (such as caring for an elderly parent or children previously done by you/the victim) **3% (9/325)**
- (12) attorney's fees **7% (21/325)**
- (13) stolen cash or checks **6% (19/325)**
- (14) other property loss or replacement **21% (69/325)**
- (15) other (please specify) _____ **8% (27/325)**
- (16) Do not know or skipped question on expenses **1% (2/325)**

{Note to interviewer: fill in this blank based on the information contained on the coversheet.}

Now we'd like to discuss the decision the compensation program made about paying your claim, on _____ *<date of determination>*.

{Note to interviewer: complete this question based on the information contained on the coversheet. Only ask if not on the coversheet.}

15. Were any of your expenses paid by the compensation program?

- (1) Yes **70% (311/445)**
- (2) No (*total denial*) (*Skip to Question #17*) **25% (110/445)**
- (9) Don't know **5% (24/445)**

15a. (If yes,) Were all the expenses you claimed paid by the compensation program?

(N=311)

- (1) Yes (*total award*) **62% (192/311)**
- (2) No (*partial award*) **31% (95/311)**
- (9) Don't know **8% (24/311)**

N=192 (42% of 452) had all claimed expenses paid
N=95 (21% of 452) had some claimed expenses paid
N=110 (24% of 452) had no claimed expenses paid
N=55 (12% of 452) didn't know or didn't answer

16. Who received the compensation payment? *(Read responses and check only one)*

(N=311)

- (1) paid directly to you **28% (87/311)**
- (2) paid directly to your service providers **48% (150/311)**
- (3) both **17% (54/311)**
- (4) *Still waiting* **2% (7/311)**
- (8) Not applicable **1% (2/311)**
- (9) *Don't know* **3% (9/311)**

If #15a is yes or don't know, skip to question 20. If #15a is no, continue to question 17.

17. Were you given any reasons why they denied part or all of your claim?

(N=203)

- (1) yes **52% (106/203)**
- (2) no *(Skip to Question #18)* **36% (72/203)**
- (9) *Don't Know(Skip to Question #18)* **11% (22/203)**

17a. What reason(s) were given? *(Check all that apply)*

(N=106)

- (1) did not file insurance claims or report the crime promptly to my insurance (health, life, car, homeowners, renters, etc.) **3% (3/106)**
- (2) did not report the crime promptly to the police **2% (2/106)**
- (3) did not cooperate with police/prosecutor (but did report to police) **1% (1/106)**
- (4) missed deadline for filing the compensation claim form **5% (5/106)**
- (5) did not provide paperwork for the compensation claim promptly **13% (14/106)**
- (6) expenses paid by insurance company or other sources **19% (20/106)**
- (7) expenses not eligible for compensation **30% (31/106)**
- (8) crime not eligible for compensation **7% (7/106)**
- (9) victim contributed to the crime **7% (7/106)**

- (10) victim's background check (i.e., felony conviction) **1% (1/106)**
- (11) other: (Please Specify) _____ **20% (19/106)**
- (99) ***Don't Know*** **5% (5/106)**

18. Did anyone explain the appeals process to you?

(N=203)

- (1) yes **16% (32/203)**
- (2) no (***Skip to Question #19***) **80% (162/203)**
- (9) ***Don't Know***(***Skip to Question #19***) **3% (6/203)**

18a. Who explained the appeals process to you? (Check all that apply)

(N=32)

- (1) the compensation program **47% (15/32)**
- (2) a friend/relative **3% (1/32)**
- (3) your lawyer **16% (5/32)**
- (4) a victim advocate **31% (10/32)**
- (5) someone else—(Please Specify) **6% (2/32)**
- (9) ***Don't Know*** **(0/32)**

18b. Did you understand the appeals process?

(N=32)

- (1) yes **75% (24/32)**
- (2) somewhat **16% (5/32)**
- (3) no **6% (2/32)**
- (9) ***Don't Know*** **3% (1/32)**

19. Did you file an appeal?

(N=203)

- (1) yes **9% (19/203)**
- (2) no (***Skip to Question #20***) **87% (177/203)**
- (3) still thinking about it (***Skip to Question #20***) **1% (1/203)**
- (7) ***skipped*** **2% (4/203)**

19a. Did you win the appeal?

(N=20)

- (1) yes **10% (2/20)**

- (2) no **30% (6/20)**
- (3) have not heard yet **60% (12/20)**

We would like to finish the interview by getting your opinions about the compensation program and how to improve it.

(Check only one response per question.)

Process of applying for compensation:

20. Was the application easy to fill out?

- (1) Yes **79% (349/443) — 93% of the 377 who gave an opinion**
- (2) No **6% (28/443)**
- (3) No opinion **(0/443)**
- (8) *Not Applicable (e.g., someone else filled out application)* **11% (50/443)**
- (9) *Don't Know* **4% (16/443)**

21. Did the application take a long time to fill out?

- (1) Yes **8% (36/443) — 5% of the 378 who gave an opinion**
- (2) No **77% (342/443)**
- (3) No opinion **(1/443)**
- (8) *Not Applicable (e.g., someone else filled out application)* **10% (46/443)**
- (9) *Don't Know* **4% (18/443)**

22. Did you need outside assistance (lawyer or other advocate) to help you through the compensation process?

- (1) Yes **32% (140/443) — 32% of the 432 who gave an opinion**
- (2) No **66% (292/443)**
- (3) No opinion **(0/443)**
- (8) *Not Applicable* **1% (5/443)**
- (9) *Don't Know* **1% (6/443)**

23. Were the letters received from the compensation program difficult to read or understand?

- (1) Yes **17% (77/443) — 18% of the 423 who gave an opinion**
- (2) No **78% (346/443)**
- (3) No opinion **1% (2/443)**
- (8) *Not Applicable* **2% (10/443)**
- (9) *Don't Know* **2% (8/443)**

24. Did you speak with someone at the compensation program?

- (1) Yes **54% (238/443)**

- (2) No (*Skip to Question #25*) **43% (189/443)**
 (9) *Don't Know* (*Skip to Question #25*) **4% (16/443)**

24a. Was that person willing to listen to your questions and concerns?

(N=238)

- (1) Yes **93% (222/238) — 95% of the 234 who gave an opinion**
 (2) No **5% (12/238)**
 (3) No opinion **(0/238)**
 (8) *Not Applicable* **1% (2/238)**
 (9) *Don't Know* **1% (2/238)**

24b. Were your questions and concerns answered by that person?

(N=238)

- (1) Yes **87% (206/238) — 89% of the 231 who gave an opinion**
 (2) No **11% (25/238)**
 (3) No opinion **(1/238)**
 (8) *Not Applicable* **1% (2/238)**
 (9) *Don't Know* **2% (4/238)**

24c. Were you asked if you needed referrals to other services?

(N=238)

- (1) Yes **29% (69/238) — 33% of the 208 who gave an opinion**
 (2) No **58% (139/238)**
 (3) No opinion **(0/238)**
 (8) N/A **(0/238)**
 (9) *Don't Know* **13% (30/238)**

24d. If you had to call someone and they had to call you back, did they call you back promptly?

(N=238)

- (1) Yes **62% (148/238) — 79% of the 188 who gave an opinion**
 (2) No **17% (40/238)**
 (3) No opinion **(0/238)**
 (8) *Not Applicable* **18% (43/238)**
 (9) *Don't Know* **3% (6/238)**

25. Was it hard or burdensome to get all the paperwork together?

- (1) Yes **27% (120/443) — 29% of the 413 who gave an opinion**
 (2) No **66% (293/443)**
 (3) No opinion **(0/443)**
 (8) *Not Applicable* **4% (18/443)**

(9) *Don't Know* 3% (12/443)

Outcome of the application process:

26. Did they pay your claim in a reasonable amount of time?

- (1) Yes 49% (215/443) — 78% of the 276 who gave an opinion
- (2) No 14% (61/443)
- (3) No opinion (0/443)
- (4) *Still waiting* 2% (7/443)
- (8) *Not Applicable* 27% (119/443)
- (9) *Don't Know* 9% (41/443)

27. Was the decision about paying your claim fair and reasonable?

- (1) Yes 63% (280/443) — 78% of the 358 who gave an opinion
- (2) No 18% (78/443)
- (3) No opinion 1% (3/443)
- (4) *Still waiting* 2% (9/443)
- (8) *Not Applicable* 7% (30/443)
- (9) *Don't Know* 10% (43/443)

28. Did the amount of time it took to receive the payment cause problems for you (such as calls from collection agencies, or not enough money on hand to pay other bills such as rent, etc.)?

- (1) Yes 21% (95/443) — 29% of the 329 who gave an opinion
- (2) No 53% (234/443)
- (3) No opinion 1% (5/443)
- (4) *Still waiting* 1% (3/443)
- (8) *Not Applicable* 23% (100/443)
- (9) *Don't Know* 1% (6/443)

29. If a friend became a crime victim, would you recommend they apply for benefits from the compensation program?

- (1) Yes 92% (406/443) — 94% of the 433 who gave an opinion
- (2) No 6% (27/443)
- (3) No opinion 1% (2/443)
- (8) *Not Applicable* (0/443)
- (9) *Don't Know* 2% (7/443)

30. Was seeking compensation more trouble than it was worth?

- (1) Yes 19% (85/443) — 20% of the 423 who gave an opinion
- (2) No 76% (338/443)
- (3) No opinion 2% (9/443)
- (8) *Not Applicable* 1% (3/443)
- (9) *Don't Know* 2% (8/443)

Requirements for getting compensation:

31. If you were not required to report the crime to the police to seek compensation, would you have reported it?

- (1) Yes **93% (412/443) — 94% of the 438 who gave an opinion**
- (2) No **6% (26/443)**
- (3) No opinion **(0/443)**
- (8) *Not Applicable* **(1/443)**
- (9) *Don't Know* **1% (4/443)**

32. If you were not required to notify your insurance company to seek compensation, would you have notified them?

- (1) Yes **61% (272/443) — 77% of the 352 who gave an opinion**
- (2) No **18% (80/443)**
- (3) No opinion **1% (2/443)**
- (8) *Not Applicable (e.g., don't have insurance)*
 17% (74/443)
- (9) *Don't Know* **3% (15/443)**

33. Did you have specific crime-related expenses that the compensation program denied? *(If there was a partial award (See Page 9, Question 15a), check "yes" even if the respondent says no and remind them that it was a partial award.)*

- (1) Yes **38% (168/443)**
- (2) No *(Skip to Question #36)* **48% (211/443)**
- (9) *Don't Know (Skip to Question #36)* **14% (64/443)**

33a. Do you think those expenses should have been covered?

(N=168)

- (1) Yes; what were those expenses? **74% (125/168)**
- (2) No **18% (30/168)**
- (3) No opinion **2% (3/168)**
- (7) *Skipped* **3% (5/168)**

- (8) *Not Applicable* **(0/168)**
- (9) *Don't Know* **3% (5/168)**

33b1. *Should have covered expenses for medical*

(N=125)

- (1) Yes **34% (43/125)**
- (2) No **65% (81/125)**
- (7) *Skipped* **1% (1/125)**

33b2. *Should have covered expenses for dental*
(N=125)

- (1) Yes 6% (8/125)
- (2) No 92% (115/125)
- (7) Skipped 2% (2/125)

33b3. *Should have covered expenses for mental health*
(N=125)

- (1) Yes 14% (18/125)
- (2) No 85% (106/125)
- (7) Skipped 1% (1/125)

33b4. *Should have covered expenses for rehabilitation*
(N=125)

- (1) Yes 2% (2/125)
- (2) No 97% (121/125)
- (7) Skipped 2% (2/125)

33b5. *Should have covered expenses for transportation*
(N=125)

- (1) Yes 11% (14/125)
- (2) No 88% (110/125)
- (7) Skipped 1% (1/125)

33b6. *Should have expenses for funeral*
(N=125)

- (1) Yes 6% (7/125)
- (2) No 93% (116/125)
- (7) Skipped 2% (2/125)

33b7. *Should have covered expenses for lost wages*
(N=125)

- (1) Yes 24% (30/125)
- (2) No 76% (95/125)
- (7) Skipped (0/125)

33b8. *Should have covered expenses for loss of support*
(N=125)

- (1) Yes 2% (2/125)
- (2) No 98% (122/125)
- (7) Skipped 1% (1/125)

33b9. *Should have covered expenses for crime scene clean up*
(N=125)

- (1) Yes 3% (4/125)

- (2) No **96% (120/125)**
(7) Skipped **1% (1/125)**

33b10. *Should have covered expenses for moving*
(N=125)

- (1) Yes **1% (1/125)**
(2) No **98% (122/125)**
(7) Skipped **2% (2/125)**

33b11. *Should have covered expenses for replacement services*
(N=125)

- (1) Yes **(0/125)**
(2) No **98% (123/125)**
(7) Skipped **2% (2/125)**

33b12. *Should have covered expenses for attorney fees*
(N=125)

- (1) Yes **2% (3/125)**
(2) No **96% (120/125)**
(7) Skipped **2% (2/125)**

33b13. *Should have covered expenses for stolen cash or checks*
(N=125)

- (1) Yes **5% (6/125)**
(2) No **94% (117/125)**
(7) Skipped **2% (2/125)**

33b14. *Should have covered expenses for other property loss*
(N=125)

- (1) Yes **16% (20/125)**
(2) No **82% (103/125)**
(7) Skipped **2% (2/125)**

33b15. *Should have covered expenses for other, or skipped, or do not know*
(N=125)

- (1) Yes **8% (10/125)**
(2) No **88% (110/125)**
(7) Skipped **4% (5/125)**

(NOTE: The following question applies only when the entire claim was denied. Skip this question for total and partial awards (i.e., Question #15 is “yes”).

34. Was your claim denied because the crime committed against you (*or* the victim) is not covered by the program?

(N=110)

- (1) Yes 9% (10/110)
- (2) No (*Skip to Question #35*) 43% (47/110)
- (8) *Not Applicable (Skip to Question #35)* 1% (1/110)
- (9) *Don't Know (Skip to Question #35)* 22% (24/110)

34a. Do you think that type of **crime** should have been covered?

(N=10)

- (1) Yes; what type of crime was it ? _____ 100% (10/10)
- (2) No
- (3) No opinion
- (8) *Don't Know*

34b1. *Should have covered violent crime*

(N=10)

- (1) Yes 50% (5/10)
- (2) No 50% (5/10)

34b2. *Should have covered property crime*

(N=10)

- (1) Yes 40% (4/10)
- (2) No 60% (6/10)

34b3. *Should have covered other type of crime*

(N=10)

- (1) Yes 10% (1/10)
- (2) No 90% (9/10)

35. Was all or part of your claim denied because it was for more money than the program allows?

(N=168)

- (1) Yes 8% (13/168) — 11% of the 122
who answered yes or no
- (2) No (*Skip to Question #36*) 65% (109/168)
- (7) *Skipped* 5% (9/168)
- (9) *Don't Know (Skip to Question #36)* 22% (37/168)

35a. Do you think the amount allowed should be higher?

(N=13)

- (1) Yes 54% (7/13)
- (2) No 31% (4/13)
- (3) No opinion (0/13)
- (8) *Not Applicable* 8% (1/13)
- (9) *Don't Know* 8% (1/13)

36. Do you have any suggestions to improve the compensation program to help other victims in the future?

(1) yes⇒(what are your suggestion(s)?) 51% (227/443)

- Simplify program procedures*
5% (11/227)
- More extensive outreach/advertisement*
21% (47/227)
- Better explanations of program's procedures and options*
19% (42/227)
- More personal/supportive staff*
6% (14/227)
- Program procedures (including payments) should occur more quickly*
8% (18/227)
- Program should offer more compensation*
1% (3/227)
- Program should cover a greater number of expenses*
5% (11/227)
- Other*
22% (50/227)

Content analyses of these 50 responses:

14 (6% of 227) wanted better coordination with other agencies

11 (5% of 227) wanted expansion of eligibility criteria

10 (5% of 227) wanted better communication with compensation staff

5 (2% of 227) wanted more assistance with application

5 (2% of 227) wanted application in Spanish

5 (2% of 227) wanted more punishment for offender

(2) no 49% (216/443)

{Note to interviewer: fill in this information based on the information contained on the coversheet. Only ask if not on the coversheet. Ask questions about victim (#38, 40, 42, 44) only if claimant and victim are not the same person.}

Finally, I have a few demographic questions for statistical purposes.

37. What is your (the claimant's) date of birth? _____ (MM/DD/YY) (If respondent is primary victim, Skip to Question #39.)

N=439

Median Age: 40 years old

Mean Age: 42 years old

Range: 18-92

38. (If you were not the direct or primary victim,) what is the victim's date of birth?
_____ (MM/DD/YY)

(N=173)

Median Age: 16 years old

Mean Age: 18 years old

Range: 1-89

39. What is your (the claimant's) sex? (If respondent is primary victim, Skip to Question #41.)

(1) Male 30% (133/443)

(2) Female 70% (310/443)

40. (If you were not the direct or primary victim,) what is the victim's sex?

(N=176)

(1) Male 39% (69/176)

(2) Female 60% (106/176)

41. What is your (the claimant's) race? (Check only one) (If respondent is primary victim, Skip to Question #43.)

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian (non-Hispanic) | 73% (321/443) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> African-American | 16% (71/443) |
| (3) <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic | 8% (35/443) |
| (4) <input type="checkbox"/> Asian\South Asian\Pacific Islander | 1% (6/443) |
| (5) <input type="checkbox"/> Native American | 1% (4/443) |
| (6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other? _____ | (0/443) |
| (7) <input type="checkbox"/> Skipped | 1% (2/443) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> Refused | 1% (3/443) |

42. (If you were not the direct or primary victim,) what is the victim's race? (Check only one)
(N=176)

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian (non-Hispanic) | 71% (125/176) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> African-American | 16% (28/176) |
| (3) <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic | 9% (16/176) |

- (4) Asian\South Asian\Pacific Islander **2% (3/176)**
- (5) Native American **1% (2/176)**
- (6) Other? _____ **1% (1/176)**
- (7) Skipped **1% (1/176)**

43. What was your (the claimant's) main source of income at the time of the crime? (*Check ALL that apply*) (*If respondent is primary victim, Skip to closing.*)

- (1) Own employment
66% (294/443)
- (2) Victim's employment (if claimant is not the victim)
1% (3/443)
- (3) Other family members' income
14% (60/443)
- (4) Government assistance (Welfare, social security, unemployment, etc.)
20% (89/443)
- (5) Financial aid/school loans
(1/443)
- (6) Other? (Please Specify) _____
5% (20/443)
- (9) Refused to answer **(0/443)**

44. (If you were not the direct or primary victim,) what was the **victim's** main source of income at the time of the crime. (*Check ALL that apply*)

(N=176)

- (1) Own employment
23% (41/176)
- (2) Other family members' income
69% (121/176)
- (3) Government assistance (Welfare, social security, unemployment, etc.)
10% (17/176)
- (4) Financial aid/school loans
(0/176)
- (5) Other? (Please Specify) _____
1% (1/176)
- (9) Refused to answer **(0/176)**

Thank you very much. We appreciate your time and patience. We hope it helps other cases like yours. Now, I'd like to get an address where I can mail the \$10 check; where would you like me to send it? Should I put your name on the envelope or another name? *<Record name and address on last page of survey form>* You should receive the check in no more than a month.

I have a toll-free number to get information on services for crime victims where you live. Would you like to have it? (*1-800-TRY-NOVA which is 1-800-879-6682*). Thank you again for your participation.

Time interview ended: _____

Length of Interview (minutes) _____

VOCA Evaluation

**VICTIM PAYMENT FORM
(\$10 per form)**

Respondent's Name: _____

Respondent's Address: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Signature of Interviewer: _____

Check Number: _____

Appendix F

Compensation Claimant Survey Methods

The findings from our survey of 452 compensation claimants are of limited usefulness if these claimants are not broadly representative of claimants at large. That is, if those who participated in our survey represent only certain types of victims, or certain types of crimes, or certain types of claims, the findings from the survey may apply to only those groups. To assess whether we met our goal of including claimants who broadly represent all claimants in general, so that our findings are valid across the board, we compared our sample with information from several larger samples of claims. These include claims that were sampled for the survey but the claimants were not surveyed; all claims reported to OVC by these six states for 2000; and aggregate national data compiled by OVC for 1998 (the most recent year for which national data are available).

Summary of Sample Representativeness

We completed surveys with 36 percent of the claims sampled by the six compensation programs, using recent determinations as the sampling criterion. The biggest obstacle was reaching claimants by phone: while 78 percent of those we reached completed the survey, we were able to reach fewer than half the sampled claimants. Comparisons of those we surveyed with those we sampled but did not survey indicate that there were no differences between these groups on a number of factors associated with the crime, the claim processing and outcome, victim demographics, and types of agencies referring the claimant to compensation. Comparisons of survey participants with all the claims reported for 2000 by these six states indicate that claims represented in our survey may have been processed slightly more quickly than claims in general for the year; approval rates were quite similar across the two groups; and payment amounts may have been lower for the surveyed claims than for claims in general (although this is likely a function of the fact that we sampled *recently determined* claims, for which complete payment data were not yet available at the point of sampling). Comparisons of survey participants with claims reported across the nation for 1998 found that surveyed claims were processed much more quickly and were more likely to be approved than claims in general across the nation; this seems most likely due to the earlier time period for the national data, and the fact that many states have recently increased their processing time and approval rates dramatically. Payment amounts for the surveyed claims were lower than payment amounts for claims in 1998, which again may be a product of having sampled recently determined claims without complete payment data available.

Analyses of Sampling and Survey Processes

We began with a comparison between our survey respondents and other claims sampled by the six state compensation programs, in which the claimants did not participate in the survey. Since we sampled several hundred recently determined claims in each state, this tells us whether the survey participants were representative of other recently-determined claims in these states. These analyses are limited to the claim information provided by the programs, and include characteristics of the crime, victim, and claim process and outcome.

We asked compensation program staff in each of the six site visit states to provide us with the names, contact information, and selected crime, claimant, victim, and claim data for 200 to 250 recently determined claims. The point of sampling ranged from late 1999 to mid-2000 across the six states. We

then cleaned the databases provided by the states to eliminate any duplicate claimants¹⁴⁴ and any claims for which complete contact information was not provided (for example, no phone numbers). Table 21 presents state-by-state information on data received from the compensation program, the claims we tried to reach by phone (after the data cleaning process), and the outcomes of the survey process.

Table 21: Summary Sampling Information for Each State

	CA	ID	PA	SC	VT	WI	TOTAL
Claims provided by state program	237	205	214	242	299	234	1380
Claims we tried to reach by telephone (after data cleaning)	233	190	154 ¹⁴⁵	219	242	231	1269 (92% of all claims provided)
Claimants reached by telephone	100	82	98	89	101	108	578
Percent reached by phone	43%	43%	64% ¹⁴⁶	41%	42%	47%	46%
Claimants who participated in survey	76	77	68	73	77	81	452 ¹⁴⁷
Percent of those reached who participated	76%	94% ¹⁴⁸	69%	82%	76%	75%	78%

These statistics show that the biggest obstacle was reaching claimants by phone – we were able to reach fewer than half of those we attempted to contact. The predominant reason for this was invalid phone numbers: of the 691 claimants we attempted but failed to reach, in 436 cases (63%) we were not given and could not obtain a valid phone number for the individual. For the other 255 cases (37%), we could not get the claimant on the phone after six or more attempts.

However, once we got the claimant on the phone, we enjoyed considerable success in conducting the survey: 78 percent of the claimants we spoke with participated in the survey (plus an additional eight claimants who participated in the pilot phase of survey development).

¹⁴⁴ For example, in one state the same handful of social workers was listed as the claimant for several dozen claims involving minor victims. Because these social workers may not be able to differentiate one claim from another when they filed so many, and because they may have a different perspective from the layperson/claimant surveyed for the other claims, we decided to exclude these cases.

¹⁴⁵ The 60 cases we did not attempt to contact in this state include 7 duplicates and another 53 cases remaining on the call list when surveying stopped in this state.

¹⁴⁶ It is not clear why a higher proportion of claimants in this state were reached by phone than in the other states. Perhaps the state compensation program is very strong at maintaining current contact information for claimants.

¹⁴⁷ In addition, 8 claimants participated in pilot surveys.

¹⁴⁸ The higher participation rate for claimants in this state is probably due to the fact that, before releasing claimant information to us, the state compensation program sent sampled claimants a letter notifying them of the survey and offering the option to deny consent for their names to be released. While only a very few claimants contacted the program to request their names be withheld, the prior contact no doubt helped to familiarize claimants with the survey and gave it added credibility.

Comparisons of Survey Participants and Non-Participants

Nonetheless, we still surveyed only 36 percent of the claims sampled by the state programs (452 of the 1269 claims left after database cleaning eliminated 8% of the cases). Because this is only a minority of the claims, we were concerned that those we surveyed might differ in some systematic way from those we did not include in the survey, threatening the validity of our findings. We compared characteristics of these two groups of claims on data provided by the state programs, since these were the only data we had for those who did not participate in the survey.

We conducted bivariate statistical analyses (t-tests and chi-squares, as appropriate) to determine whether the claimants we surveyed were different from those we did not survey on data provided by the states:¹⁴⁹

- type of crime
- victims' age
- victims' race
- victims' sex
- type of referral organization (e.g., police, prosecutor, nonprofit advocate/service provider, etc.)
- claim processing time
- determination made (claim approved or denied)
- reasons for denial (e.g., incomplete paperwork, ineligible crime or expenses, victim contributory misconduct, etc.)
- payment amounts

None of these analyses found that the surveyed and non-surveyed claimants were different at the standard .05 level of statistical significance. That is, we can be 95% sure that the two groups did not differ, on the whole, on any of these factors.

Comparisons of Survey Participants and Aggregate State Data

While it is reassuring that those who participated in the survey did not differ from sampled non-participants on any of these important factors, there is still a question as to whether those sampled by the state programs differed from other recent cases in the states. It could represent another threat to the validity of our results if there are important differences between survey participants and the states' cases in general. We therefore compared our survey sample with aggregate data these six states reported to OVC for 2000, to see how representative our sample is of these states' claims for the year. These analyses are limited to data on processing time, approval rates, and payments made (the only information available for both the surveyed claims and the states' claims for the year). Case-level

¹⁴⁹ Additional data on whether the claimant was also the direct victim of the crime was provided by only 3 of the states, so was excluded from these analyses.

statistical analyses (as we did for the analyses of surveyed vs. sampled but non-surveyed cases) were not possible because the data on all year 2000 cases for these states are only available in aggregate form.

For 371 of the surveyed claims (one state did not provide us with case-level information to allow us to compute case processing time), the average processing time *from receipt of the claim to date of determination* was ten weeks. This ranged from less than one week to 56 weeks. For all cases determined by these five states in 2000 (excluding the state that did not provide case-level data on processing time), aggregate reports from the states to OVC indicate an average processing time of 18 weeks *from receipt of the claim to making payment on approved claims* (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/fund/sbsmap). Note that the state-wide aggregate time period includes the time from determination to awarding payment, which is excluded in the figure for the surveyed cases. The only data available on this particular phase of processing is nation-wide data from 1998, which found an average of five weeks from completion of the decision-making process to actual payment. We should therefore add about five weeks to our 10-week average for the surveyed claims. This closes the gap but still leaves the possibility that the surveyed cases were processed more quickly (at an average of 15 weeks) than the states' other cases in the same general timeframe (at an average of 18 weeks).

Of the 452 claims represented in our survey sample, 87% were approved by the compensation programs. For all cases processed in 2000, aggregate data from the six states give a cross-state average approval rate of 84% (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/fund/sbsmap). This is unlikely to be significantly different from the 87% approval rate of the survey sample, so we can conclude that the surveyed claims were neither more nor less likely to be approved than these states' recent claims in general.

Five of the states provided us with payment data on surveyed cases. For these 375 cases, a total of \$329,230 had been paid out at the point of sampling. This is an average of \$1,553 for the 212 cases with payments made (the other 163 cases had either been denied or had been approved but no payments had yet been made). For these same five states (excluding the one that did not provide case-level payment data for the survey sample), 48,819 claims were paid in 2000, at an average of \$1,966 per claim (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/fund/sbsmap). This probably indicates that the claims represented in our survey sample had *at the point of sampling* been paid at somewhat lower amounts than these states' recent claims in general. It seems likely that supplemental payments to some of the most recently-determined claims may have been made after the point of sampling (since quite a few claims were determined within only a few months prior to the time the sample was selected).

Comparisons of Survey Participants and Aggregate National Data

A final concern about sample representativeness and validity of the survey findings remains: what if claims from these states are somehow different from claims in other states? If they are, the survey findings may apply to the six particular states but not to the nation as a whole. To shed some light on this question, we compared data from the survey sample with aggregate nation-wide data compiled by OVC from all states' 1998 performance reports (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/fund/images/98vc1.gif). Again, comparisons can only be made on processing times, approval rates, and amounts paid.

Across the nation, claim processing time *from receipt of claim to completion of the decision-making process* averaged 20 weeks. The average was ten weeks from receipt of claim to date of determination (essentially the same definition of processing) in our survey sample. It seems most likely that cases in our sample were processed in half the time because many states have taken a number of measures to improve case processing time in recent years. For example, one of the large states in our survey has drastically reduced its average processing time in the last several years, from 30 weeks in 1997 to 13 weeks in 2000. Thus, this difference may be due more to the fact that the most recent national-level data available for comparison are two years old, than to a real difference in case processing time between the survey sample and other cases across the nation. While less likely, it is possible that our survey sample was processed more quickly than claims in general typically are.

The approval rate was 87 percent in our survey sample, compared with a 71 percent approval rate across the nation in 1998. Again, the age of the nation-wide data probably accounts for this difference, since many states have improved their efforts to serve claimants and train those who work with victims on compensation procedures. The better informed victims and their helpers are about the compensation program and requirements, the more likely that eligible and complete claims – those most likely to be approved – will be submitted. However, it is still possible that our surveyed claims were more likely to be approved than claims in general, across the nation.

Finally, the average payment of \$1,553 per claim in our survey is much lower than the average payment of \$2,255 for claims across the nation in 1998. This may be due to the fact that the surveyed claims had only recently been determined and payments were still in progress, or payment amounts may be trending downwards in more recent years (which does not seem likely given general trends in compensation programs, but cannot be ruled out), or our sample may consist of claims paid at lower average amounts than claims in general. None of these possibilities can be ruled in or out in the absence of more recent nation-wide data and complete data on payments on the surveyed claims.

Appendix G

Survey of VOCA Assistance Administrators

→ Instructions are in bold text preceded by an arrow (→).

56 respondents

Length of interview:

Average = 65.1 Range = 34 - 117 [Time in minutes]

Introduction

This is part of a study sponsored by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and conducted by the Urban Institute. This is a national study about assistance services for victims of crime.

You should have received a letter of introduction from OVC and a copy of the questionnaire we'd like to complete with you, as well as a summary of descriptive information on your state's program, from the Urban Institute. Please review this summary prior to completing the survey.

First, we'd like to confirm:

Name: _____
Position: _____
How long at this position: _____

→ **If less than 1 year:** Were you in assistance services before?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

Management

1.

We sent you an information sheet about your VOCA Victim Assistance Program. This information was compiled from OVC Performance Reports, and Internet homepages for state programs. Is all the information accurate?

→ **Check one box that applies**

- 1. Yes → **Skip to Q2** 41% (23/56)
- 2. No → **Continue with 1A**

1A. What needs to be revised?

→ **Make revisions on Summary Sheet**

2.

Since fiscal year 1995, states have been allowed to use up to 5% of federal assistance grant

funds for administrative purposes. According to OVC information on your state, you used or will use:

_____% in 1995
 _____% in 1996 Average = 3.7%
 _____% in 1997 Average = 4.0%
 _____% in 1998 Average = 4.4%
 _____% in 1999

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. If ALWAYS used the full 5%, complete 2A and 2B
- 2. If used SOME funding, complete 2A, 2B, and 2C
- 3. If NEVER used any funds, complete 2C

- 36% (20/56) always used the full 5% of funds for administrative purposes
- 64% (36/56) used some of the 5% of funds for administrative purposes

2A. For what purposes have you ever used VOCA assistance funds?

→ Check all that apply

2B. For each of the ways in which you have used assistance funds for administration, how useful have these activities been to the administration of the program?

→ Rate each option according to the scale:

- 1 = not very useful
- 2 = moderately useful
- 3 = extremely useful

	Not very useful	Moderately useful	Extremely useful
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. pay salary and benefits for staff, or consultant fees, to administer and manage the financial or programmatic aspects of VOCA	1	2	3
89% (50/56)			96%
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. attend OVC-sponsored or other relevant technical assistance meetings	1	2	3
91% (51/56)			92%

	Not very useful	Moderately useful	Extremely useful
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. monitor subrecipients or potential subrecipients, provide technical assistance, or conduct evaluation or assessment of program activities 84% (47/56)	1	2	3 94%
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. purchase equipment for the state grantee, such as computers, software, fax machine, copying machines, etc. 84% (47/56)	1	2	3 85%
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. train VOCA service providers 63% (35/56)	1	2	3 100%
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. purchase memberships in crime victims' organizations and victim-related materials, such as curricula, literature, and protocols 63% (35/56)	1	2	3 30% 70%
<input type="checkbox"/> 7. develop strategic plans on a state and/or regional basis, conduct surveys and needs assessments, or promote innovative approaches to serving crime victims (such as through technology) 54% (30/56)	1	2	3
<input type="checkbox"/> 8. improve coordination efforts on behalf of crime victims with other OJP offices and bureaus, or with federal, state, or local agencies and organizations 52% (29/56)	1	2	3 72%
<input type="checkbox"/> 9. provide training on crime victim issues to public or private nonprofit organizations that assist crime victims 63% (35/56)	1	2	3 29% 66%
<input type="checkbox"/> 10. print and/or develop publications such as training manuals, victim service directories, or victims' brochures 66% (37/56)	1	2	3 76%

	Not very useful	Moderately useful	Extremely useful
<input type="checkbox"/> 11. coordinate or develop protocols, policies, or procedures that promote systemic change in the ways crime victims are treated or served 34% (19/56)	1	2	3
		42%	42%
<input type="checkbox"/> 12. train managers of victim service agencies 45% (25/56)	1	2	3
		36%	60%
<input type="checkbox"/> 13. develop an automated grants tracking system 32% (18/56)	1	2	3
			89%
<input type="checkbox"/> 14. pay audit costs 27% (15/56)	1	2	3
		47%	47%
<input type="checkbox"/> 15. pay for indirect costs at a federally approved indirect cost rate 21% (12/56)	1	2	3
	50%		33%
<input type="checkbox"/> 16. other: _____ - _____ -	1	2	3

2C. What are the reasons you have not made full use of the administrative allowance?

→ Check all that apply

38 administrators responded

- 1. the funds are more urgently needed for awards to subgrantees 42% (16/38)
- 2. administrative funding has been available from other sources 42% (16/38)
- 3. OVC documentation requirements present obstacles to using these funds for administrative purposes 5% (2/38)
- 4. other: _____ 37%
(14/38)

Other includes:

- 1) use of funds was not approved

- 2) budgeting issues
- 3) only used what was needed so the remainder could be used in the field

Training

3.

OVC records indicate that you used or will use a total of _____% of your FY 1995 VOCA Assistance funds for training; _____% of your FY 1996 funds; _____% of your FY 1997 funds; _____% of your FY 1998 funds; and _____% of your FY 1999 funds (if available). What (other) state or federal funds have you used to support training?

Average VOCA funds used for training:

1996: 0.18%

1997: 0.26%

1998: 0.33%

→ Check all that apply

- 1. money set aside by the state legislature 13% (7/56)
- 2. other state funds, including state-funded staff: _____ 48% (27/56)
Other includes:
 - 1) general revenue funds
 - 2) state compensation funds / funds generated from state fines, penalties and fees paid through court system
 - 3) other state appropriations
- 3. VAWA funds 59% (33/56)
- 4. CDC funds 9% (5/56)
- 5. other federal funds: _____ 16% (9/56)
- 6. other funds: _____ 21% (12/56)
- 7. Byrne Grant funds 20% (11/56)

→ For those who have not used any VOCA assistance funds for training purposes since FY 1995, or have used less than 1%:

3A. You have not used VOCA assistance funds for training purposes in this time period, or you have used less than 1%. What are the reasons you have not used more of the VOCA grant for training:

→ Check all that apply 54 administrators responded

- 1. the funds are more urgently needed for awards 46% (25/54)
- 2. training funding has been available from other sources 50% (27/54)
- 3. OVC documentation requirements present obstacles to using these funds for training purposes 15% (8/54)
- 4. we had difficulty meeting OVC match requirements 13% (7/54)
- 5. other: _____ 28% (16/54)

Other included:

- 1) Do not have sufficient staffing to conduct/plan training
- 2) Subgrantees provide training at the local level

4.

Has your agency provided or arranged for training opportunities for administrators, grant monitors, allied professionals, or victim service providers (not limited to VOCA funds)?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes → Continue with 4A, then 4B 93% (52)
- 2. No → Skip to Q6

4A. Which of the following individuals or groups did your program provide or arrange training for in the last year?

→ Check all that apply

Criminal justice professionals

- 1. law enforcement 85% (44/52)
- 2. Prosecutors 75% (39/52)
- 3. Judges 54% (28/52)
- 4. probation/parole 62% (32/52)
- 5. Corrections 50% (26/52)
- 6. state criminal justice planning organization 39% (20/52)

7. other: _____

Victim services professionals

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8. state domestic violence coalition or local service providers | 96% (50/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9. state sexual assault coalition or local service providers | 94% (49/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10. federal victim/witness coordinators, including military | 46% (24/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11. state or local police-based victim/witness staff | 73% (38/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12. state or local prosecution-based victim/witness staff | 87% (45/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13. MADD | 64% (33/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 14. survivors of homicide representatives | 65% (34/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15. other grassroots victims' organizations | 62% (32/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16. state or local protective service agencies, such as those serving
child abuse victims, elder abuse victims, and vulnerable adults | 71% (37/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 17. other: _____ | |

Other allied professionals

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18. health care providers | 58% (30/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 19. mental health care providers | 64% (33/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20. Attorneys | 40% (21/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21. Clergy | 37% (19/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 22. funeral directors | 15% (8/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 23. Indian tribal representatives | 27% (14/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 24. representatives of other ethnic and minority groups | 33% (17/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25. other: _____ | |

Others

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 26. staff of compensation program | 54% (28/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 27. major employers | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 28. school personnel | 21% (11/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 29. victims or their survivors | 33% (17/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30. other: _____ | 0% |

4B. What topics were included in the training?

→ Check *all* that apply

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. collaboration with other agencies | 85% (44/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. counseling and interviewing skills | 56% (29/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. crisis intervention and emergency procedures | 73% (38/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. grant administration | 79% (41/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. interfacing with the media | 29% (15/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6. legal rights of victims | 69% (36/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. safety planning, not limited to domestic violence | 46% (24/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8. substance abuse | 25% (13/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9. public education | 25% (13/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10. obtaining compensation for victims | 69% (36/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11. Outreach | 56% (29/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12. program management | 60% (31/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13. understanding and working with the criminal justice systems | 77% (40/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 14. use of technology | 56% (29/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15. gang violence | 27% (14/52) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16. working with victims of particular types of crime, please specify: | 64% (33/52) |
| 18% of respondents who answered “yes” to #16 specified types of crime including workplace violence, consumer fraud, campus crime, drug abuse, children who witness violence, major trauma to communities, victims of juvenile offenders | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 17. working with victims from specific demographic areas or groups, please specify: | 48% (25/52) |
| 28% of respondents who answered “yes” to #17 specified groups including: | |
| 1) Native Americans | |
| 2) South East Asians, Samolis, Laotians | |

3) refugees

18. other training topics, please specify: _____ 12% (6/52)

5.

How was the training provided?

→ **Check all that apply** 52 administrators responded

5A. How useful were these training experiences to the participants, based on feedback or evaluations?

→ **Rate each option according to the scale:**

- 1 = not very useful
- 2 = moderately useful
- 3 = extremely useful

	Not very useful	Moderately useful	Extremely useful
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. through regional conferences or training sessions around the state 69% (36/52)	1	2	3 83%
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. through state-wide conferences or training sessions 92% (48/52)	1	2	3 94%
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. through state training academies we have developed with training funds 17% (9/52)	1	2	3 100%
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. by allowing subrecipients to use grant funds to attend OVC's National Victim Assistance Academy 56% (29/52)	1	2	3 69%
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. by allowing subrecipients to use grant funds to attend other out-of-state conferences or training sessions 87% (45/52)	1	2	3 82%
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. other: _____ 12% (6/52)	1	2	3 67%

Planning and Subrecipient Funding Process

6.

Is there a process in place to determine the needs of crime victims throughout the state?

→ **Check one box that applies**

1. Yes → **Continue with 6A** 84% (47 respondents)

2. No → **Skip to Q7**

6A. Which groups were included in determining victims' needs?
→ **Check all that apply**

Criminal justice agencies

- 1. law enforcement 87% (41/47)
- 2. Prosecutors 92% (43/47)
- 3. probation/parole 64% (30/47)
- 4. Corrections 66% (31/47)
- 5. Judges 68% (32/47)
- 6. state criminal justice planning organization 66% (31/47)

Victim services

- 7. state domestic violence coalition/providers 100%
- 8. state sexual assault coalition/providers 89% (42/47)
- 9. federal victim/witness coordinators 60% (28/47)
- 10. MADD 55% (26/47)
- 11. survivors of homicide representatives 62% (29/47)
- 12. other state protective service agencies, such as those serving child abuse victims, elder abuse victims, and vulnerable adults 70% (33/47)

Allied professions

- 13. legal service providers 45% (21/47)
- 14. health care providers 47% (22/47)
- 15. mental health care providers 51% (24/47)
- 16. Indian tribal representatives 23% (11/47)
- 17. representatives of other ethnic and minority groups 36% (17/47)

Others

- 18. Victims 75% (35/47)
- 19. local, county, district (etc.) boards or trustees 21% (10/47)
- 20. other: _____ 6% (3/47)

6B. Do you use an advisory group?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes → Continue with 6C 72% (34/47)
- 2. No → Skip to 6D

6C. Is it required by law?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes 38% (18/47)
- 2. No

6D. Do you document victims' needs through formal assessment?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes → Continue with 6E 57% (27/47)
- 2. No → Skip to 6F

6E. How is the formal assessment accomplished?

→ Check all that apply

- 1. interviews, focus groups, or phone/mail surveys with victim service agencies 67% (31/47)
- 2. interviews, focus groups, or phone/mail surveys with victims 59% (28/47)
- 3. interviews, focus groups, or phone/mail surveys with others: _____ 30% (14/47)
 - 1) criminal justice professionals
 - 2) subgrantees
- 4. statistical data on crime rates, population distributions, etc. 82% (39/47)
- 5. other sources or methods: _____ 30% (14/47)

Other includes:

- 1) needs assessment
- 2) annual/quarterly reports from subgrantees
- 3) public hearings

6F. Do you do any other kind of assessment? Please describe the process used to determine victim needs: (46 respondents)

Yes = 63% (29/46)

No = 37% (17/46)

Other kinds of assessment include:

- 1) Feedback from site visits and/or progress reports
- 2) Advisory councils (includes both state-wide and community-based councils)
- 3) Through information gathered during the application process
- 4) A “needs survey” of victims who have used the Assistance program

7.

Do you have updated information (within the last 12 months) on the total number of victim assistance programs in the state funded by all federal and state sources?

→ Check one box that applies

1. Yes → Continue with 7A 61% (34/56)
2. No → Skip to Q8

7A. Do you have information on what types of services they provide?

→ Check one box that applies

1. Yes 97% (33/34)
2. No

7B. Do you have information on approximately how many victims they serve?

→ Check one box that applies

1. Yes 79% (27/34)
2. No

7C. Do you have information on who these victims are, in terms of the type of crime and/or victim demographic characteristics?

→ Check one box that applies

1. Yes 77% (26/34)
2. No

8.

Are there any counties or communities in your state that have no services for crime victims, not even a local contact?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes 25% (14/56)
- 2. No
- 3. Don't know

9.

How many years are covered in the state's strategic plan for victim assistance funding?

_____ years → Continue with 9A 48% (27/56)

Average number of years in strategic plan = 3.8 (range = 1-10)

There is no strategic plan → Skip to Q10

9A. What are the top priorities identified in the plan?

→ Check all that apply

- 1. stabilize existing services 70% (19/27)
- 2. develop new types of services not now widely available 70% (19/27)
- 3. reach new types of victims (defined by demographic characteristics or type of crime) not now well-served 82% (22/27)
- 4. reach new areas of the state not now well-served 82% (22/27)
- 5. other: _____ 22%
(6/27)

Other includes:

- 1) Coordination of services to avoid duplication
- 2) prevention & public education
- 3) training

9B. Were any of the following groups included in the development of the long-range plan?

→ Check all that apply

Criminal justice agencies

- 1. law enforcement 78% (21/27)
- 2. Prosecutors 85% (23/27)
- 3. probation/parole 44% (12/27)
- 4. Corrections 41% (11/27)
- 5. Judges 37% (10/27)
- 6. state criminal justice planning organization 56% (15/27)

Victim services

- 7. state domestic violence coalition/providers 96% (26/27)
- 8. state sexual assault coalition/providers 96% (26/27)
- 9. Federal victim/witness coordinators 37% (10/27)
- 10. MADD 41% (11/27)
- 11. survivors of homicide representatives 44% (12/27)
- 12. other state protective service agencies, such as those serving child abuse victims, elder abuse victims, and vulnerable adults 67% (18/27)

Allied professions

- 13. legal service providers 41% (11/27)
- 14. health care providers 33% (9/27)
- 15. mental health care providers 41% (11/27)
- 16. Indian tribal representatives 19% (5/27)
- 17. representatives of other ethnic and minority groups 33% (9/27)

Others

- 18. Victims 52% (14/27)
- 19. local, county, district (etc.) boards or trustees 11% (3/27)
- 20. other: _____ 7% (2/27)

10.

The next set of questions focuses on when federal VOCA monies were received and distributed for 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999:

For 1995

10A. When did your state receive (VOCA monies became available for draw-down) 1995 VOCA money?

Date: _____ 91% (51 respondents)

1995, Second Quarter: 24% (12/51)

1995, Third Quarter: 45% (23/51)

10B. When did you issue the first subgrantee award with 1995 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 91% (51 respondents)

1995, Third Quarter: 47% (24/51)

1995, Fourth Quarter: 27% (14/51)

10C. When was the most recent subgrantee award issued with 1995 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 82% (46 respondents)

1995, Third Quarter: 15% (7/46)

1995, Fourth Quarter: 33% (15/46)

1996, Second Quarter: 11% (5/46)

1996, Third Quarter: 15% (7/46)

Summary statistics for all respondents (1995):

- Lag from receiving VOCA money to issuing the first award:
Average = 77 days, Range = -368 days to 440 days
- Lag from issuing the first VOCA award to issuing the most recent VOCA award:
Average = 181 days, Range = -30 days to 1,096 days

For 1996

10D. When did your state receive (VOCA monies became available for draw-down) 1996

VOCA money?

Date: _____ 93% (52 respondents)

1996, First Quarter: 40% (21/52)

1996, Second Quarter: 27% (14/52)

10E. When did you issue the first subgrantee award with 1996 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 93% (52 respondents)

1996, Second Quarter: 15% (8/52)

1996, Third Quarter: 44% (23/52)

1996, Fourth Quarter: 21% (11/52)

10F. When was the most recent subgrantee award issued with 1996 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 86% (48 respondents)

1996, Third Quarter: 15% (7/48)

1996, Fourth Quarter: 21% (10/48)

1997, Second Quarter: 15% (7/48)

1997, Third Quarter: 17% (8/48)

Summary statistics for all respondents (1996):

- Lag from receiving VOCA money to issuing the first award:
Average = 124 days, Range = -86 days to 607 days
- Lag from issuing the first VOCA award to issuing the most recent VOCA award:
Average = 177 days, Range = -122 days to 730 days

For 1997

10G. When did your state receive (VOCA monies became available for draw-down) 1997 VOCA money?

Date: _____ 98% (55 respondents)

1997, First Quarter: 49% (27/55)

1997, Second Quarter: 16% (9/55)

1997, Third Quarter: 13% (7/55)

10H. When did you issue the first subgrantee award with 1997 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 98% (55 respondents)

1997, Second Quarter: 16% (9/55)

1997, Third Quarter: 49% (27/55)

1997, Fourth Quarter: 22% (12/55)

10I. When was the most recent subgrantee award issued with 1997 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 96% (54 respondents)

1997, Fourth Quarter: 11% (6/54)

1998, Fourth Quarter: 22% (12/54)

1999, Second Quarter: 19% (10/54)

Summary statistics for all respondents (1997):

- Lag from receiving VOCA money to issuing the first award:
Average = 126 days, Range = -77 days to 744 days
- Lag from issuing the first VOCA award to issuing the most recent VOCA award:
Average = 391 days, Range = 0 days to 822 days

For 1998

10J. When did your state receive (VOCA monies became available for draw-down) 1998 VOCA money?

Date: _____ 95% (53 respondents)

1997, Fourth Quarter: 11% (6/53)

1998, First Quarter: 57% (30/53)

1998, Second Quarter: 9% (5/53)

10K. When did you issue the first subgrantee award with 1998 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 84% (47 respondents)

1998, Second Quarter: 11% (5/47)

1998, Third Quarter: 40% (19/47)

1998, Fourth Quarter: 21% (10/47)

10L. When was the most recent subgrantee award issued with 1998 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 82% (46 respondents)

1998, Third Quarter: 15% (7/46)

1998, Fourth Quarter: 17% (8/46)

1999, Second Quarter: 24% (11/46)

1999, Third Quarter: 20% (9/46)

Summary statistics for all respondents (1998):

- Lag from receiving VOCA money to issuing the first award:
Average = 214 days, Range = -276 days to 1,289 days
- Lag from issuing the first VOCA award to issuing the most recent VOCA award:
Average = 140 days, Range = -88 days to 415 days

For 1999

10M. When did your state receive (VOCA monies became available for draw-down) 1999 VOCA money?

Date: _____ 80% (45 respondents)

1998, Fourth Quarter: 13% (6/45)

1999, First Quarter: 56% (25/45)

1999, Second Quarter: 18% (8/45)

10N. When did you issue the first subgrantee award with 1999 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 34% (19 respondents)

1999, Second Quarter: 26% (5/19)

1999, Third Quarter: 53% (10/19)

100. When was the most recent subgrantee award issued with 1999 federal VOCA money?

Date: _____ 21% (12 respondents)

1999, Second Quarter: 33% (4/12)

1999, Third Quarter: 42% (5/12)

1999, Fourth Quarter: 25% (3/12)

11.

How do service providers find out about the availability of VOCA funds?

→ Check *all* that apply

- 1. Current recipients automatically get sent the new RFP. 89% (50/56)
- 2. RFP is published in the state or local equivalent of the Federal Register. 32% (18/56)
- 3. RFP is published in victims' services newsletters. 30% (17/56)
- 4. They are publicized through an RFP mailing list sent to (limit to type of agency, e.g., law enforcement, hospitals): _____ 64% (36/56)

Most respondents indicated that the notice is sent to an all-inclusive list that includes law enforcement, prosecutors and service providers

- 5. Other ways, please describe: _____ 16% (9/56)
- 6. Web pages. 20% (11/56)
- 7. Newspapers. 38% (21/56)
- 8. Word-of-mouth. 9% (5/56)
- 9. Meetings. 5% (3/56)

12.

Are you taking any steps to encourage *new* applicants for VOCA funds?

→ Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes → Continue with 12A 84% (47 respondents)
- 2. No → Skip to Q13

12A. Do you:

→ Check all that apply

- 1. Contact groups that serve vulnerable populations (e.g. retired persons, children, homeless). 62% (29/47)
- 2. Contact groups of allied professionals (e.g., health care providers, clergy). 43% (20/47)
- 3. Encourage applicants to call the state office with questions about the RFP process. 75% (35/47)
- 4. Give presentations at state/regional meetings of victim services. 75% (35/47)
- 5. Mail RFPs to all victim service programs in the state. 62% (29/47)
- 6. Provide an 800 number for applicants with questions. 26% (12/47)
- 7. Provide technical assistance to grass roots groups and others who may be unfamiliar with the RFP process. 70% (33/47)
- 8. Use the Internet. 57% (27/47)
- 9. Help create new victim service programs; please describe: 40% (19/47)
 - 1) outreach to underserved areas
 - 2) provide technical assistance
- 10. Provide links between existing agencies; please describe: 45% (21/47)
 - 1) demonstrated coordination is grant requirement
 - 2) cross-disciplinary training
 - 3) distribute publications describing other programs
- 11. Contact groups that serve underserved communities (such as inner city or rural areas, immigrant or Native American populations, etc.); please describe: 45% (21/47)

Make contact w/ agencies that serve underserved populations including Native American, Hispanic, elderly, disabled, hearing impaired, gay and lesbian victims.
- 12. Other, please describe: 4% (2/47)

13.

Who is involved in deciding which applicants to fund?

→ Check all that apply

- 1. Advisory Board 48% (27/56)
- 2. Task Force 5% (3/56)
- 3. VOCA victim assistance staff 77% (43/56)
- 4. VOCA victim assistance director 68% (38/56)
- 5. Proposal review panel 45% (25/56)
- 6. other state staff, please specify: 43% (24/56)
Other includes:
 - 1) Attorney General
 - 2) Governor's Office
 - 3) Victim Compensation staff/director
- 7. other groups or professionals in your state, please specify: 36% (20/56)
* Similar to 6.

13A. What groups are represented on the advisory board, task force, or proposal review panel?

→ Check all that apply

Criminal justice agencies

- 1. law enforcement 70% (39/56)
- 2. Prosecutors 71% (40/56)
- 3. probation/parole 27% (15/56)
- 4. Corrections 32% (18/56)
- 5. Judges 34% (19/56)
- 6. state criminal justice planning organization 39% (22/56)

Victim services

- 7. state domestic violence coalition/providers 68% (38/56)
- 8. state sexual assault coalition/providers 70% (39/56)
- 9. federal victim/witness coordinators 38% (21/56)
- 10. MADD 13% (7/56)

- 11. survivors of homicide representatives 29% (16/56)
- 12. other state protective service agencies, such as those serving child abuse victims, elder abuse victims, and vulnerable adults 54% (30/56)

Allied professions

- 13. legal service providers 30% (17/56)
- 14. health care providers 34% (19/56)
- 15. mental health care providers 40% (22/56)
- 16. Indian tribal representatives 9% (5/56)
- 17. representatives of other ethnic and minority groups 25% (14/56)

Others

- 18. Victims 43% (24/56)
- 19. local, county, district (etc.) boards or trustees 7% (4/56)
- 20. other: _____ 29% (16/56)

Other includes:

- 1) victim advocate / victim-witness specialist
- 2) representative from educational system
- 3) private citizens / community professionals

14.

Who makes final funding decisions?

→ Check **one** box that applies

- 1. Board of Trustees 13% (7/56)
- 2. Governor 14% (8/56)
- 3. Task Force 2% (1/56)
- 4. VOCA director 13% (7/56)
- 5. VOCA staff 2% (1/56)
- 6. Proposal review panel 2% (1/56)
- 7. Attorney General 14% (8/56)
- 8. Other individual or group, please specify: _____ 41% (23/56)

Examples of “other” include:

- a) Grant-making agency within the state government
- b) A combination of powers that could include two or more of the following: Governor, Attorney General, VOCA Administrator, and another state agency, such as the Department of Health.

An alternative summary of who makes funding decisions:

- 1) Decision-makers within the department or agency responsible for administering VOCA funds: 45% (25/56)
- 2) Decision-makers outside of the department or agency responsible for administering VOCA funds: 55% (31/56)

15.

Is there an appeals process for applicants to contest the state’s decision?

→ Check *one* box that applies

1. Yes → **Continue with 15A** 63% (35/56)
2. No → **Skip to Q16**

15A. Briefly describe the appeals process:

The appeals process is distinct for each Board. In general, the appeals process in Assistance programs share the following characteristics:

- Applicants wishing to appeal a decision must submit a letter to the Council or Board, usually within 10 to 30 days after funding has been designated.
- This letter must argue the reasons that an applicant should be reconsidered for funding (or in some cases, increased funding).
- The Board or Council usually reviews the appeal and renders

a decision within 10 days.

16.

Did your state fund all applicants at all levels they requested during the last three years?

→ Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes → Skip to Q17 11% (6/56)
- 2. Some, but not all → Continue with 16A 46% (26/56)
- 3. No → Continue with 16A 41% (23/56)

16A. After meeting federal guidelines, what are the five key criteria you used to decide which subgrantees to fund?

→ Only current criteria are applicable

The five most popular criteria:

- 1) Past performance of the agency requesting funding / demonstrated capacity to perform services well
- 2) Evidence that the proposed service is needed
- 3) Various geographic distribution criteria
- 4) Reasonable budget request / sound proposal
- 5) Agency's ability to coordinate with other service providers

17.

In addition to the federal VOCA requirements, does your state require potential subrecipients to do any of the following as a condition of funding?

→ Check *all* that apply

- 1. develop specific collaborative efforts with other agencies in their communities (other victim services, health or social services, criminal justice, etc.) 82% (46/56)
- 2. provide translation services for non-English speaking victims 27% (15/56)
- 3. provide access to services for victims with disabilities 52% (29/56)
- 4. ensure that program staff receive regular skills development training or maintain certain credentials 50% (28/56)
- 5. refer victims to other needed services in the community 75% (42/56)
- 6. maintain application forms and program brochures for victim compensation 84% (47/56)
- 7. distribute and help prepare application forms for victims 77% (43/56)

- 8. set specific project goals for use of funds and include a method for measuring whether goals are met 75% (42/56)
- 9. collect victim satisfaction data 36% (20/56)
- 10. list other sources of funding that they are currently or have already applied for 71% (40/56)
- 11. other: _____ 18% (10/56)

18. We noticed that the federal VOCA assistance grant to your state has fluctuated from:

\$ _____ in 1995 to Average = \$1,426,857, Range = \$211,000 - \$8,369,000

\$ _____ in 1996 to Average = \$2,252,429, Range = \$142,657 - \$14,009,000

\$ _____ in 1997 to Average = \$7,089,768, Range = \$260,000 - \$44,294,000

\$ _____ in 1998 to Average = \$4,922,408, Range = \$240,000 - \$29,912,825

\$ _____ in 1999, Average = \$2,856,345, Range = \$234,000 - \$25,555,000

and that there were fluctuations in prior years as well.

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. If fluctuation, continue with 18A 98% (55/56)
- 2. No fluctuation, skip to Q19

The next questions ask about different ways of dealing with the impact of funding level uncertainty in flush and lean years.

18A. In flush years, which of the following has your state engaged in:

→ Check all that apply

- 1. Funds are carried over to the next year. 86% (47/55)
Please provide the amounts carried over from one year to the next for the last several years:

1. \$_____ carried over from FY 1997 funds to FY 1998
Average = \$2,887,308, Range = \$0 - \$20,138,000

2. \$_____ carried over from FY 1998 funds to FY 1999
Average = \$2,856,345, Range = \$0 - \$14,353,369

- 2. Long-term plans are developed. 42% (23/55)
- 3. Multi-year funding is guaranteed for good programs or earmarked for specific purposes. 47% (26/55)
- 4. Special one time or supplemental awards are made 60% (33/55)
- 5. Funded special technology projects: 62% (34/55)
 - 1. automated victim notification programs 47% (16/34)
 - 2. cell phones and/or other emergency systems for victims 27% (9/34)
 - 3. automated case tracking and/or other technological innovations in program management 44% (15/34)
 - 4. e-mail systems for service providers to network and communicate availability of services 44% (15/34)
 - 5. hiring consultant to help programs with new technology 24% (8/34)
 - 6. other: _____ 18% (6/34)
- 6. Funded special outreach projects, such as projects to reach new groups of victims (e.g., immigrant victims, or victims of gang violence or fraud) 39% (21/55)
- 7. Funded special coordination projects, such as those to link criminal justice and human service systems 15% (8/55)
- 8. Funded other innovative projects, such as restorative justice programs, legal services for battered women, or an ombudsman program 36% (20/55)
- 9. Increased salaries or benefits of victim assistance providers 62% (34/55)
- 10. Other ways of dealing with fluctuations please describe: _____
_____ 31% (17/55)

Other ways of dealing with the fluctuations:

- 1) Increase the amount of on-going services provided
- 2) Increased the categories of acceptable purchases for subgrantees (i.e., computers, out-of-state travel, conferences, etc)
- 3) Level VOCA funds over a three-year period for a subgrantee

18B. In lean years, which of the following has your state engaged in:

→ Check *all* that apply

- 1. The number of programs funded is reduced. 26% (14/55)
- 2. The same number of programs are funded but for less than the requested amounts (e.g. funded applicants receive no more than a set percentage of what they request). 73% (40/55)
- 3. Leftover funds from previous years are used. 66% (36/55)
- 4. The state picks up the cost. 9% (5/55)
- 5. Other ways of dealing with fluctuations, please describe: _____
_____ 24% (13/55)

Other ways of dealing with the fluctuations:

- 1) Adjust the grant funding period
- 2) Concentrate funding on core services
- 3) Level funding, so the same number of programs can be funded each year

19.

Are the assistance funds available through your office sufficient to meet the demands of local service providers?

→ Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes → Skip to Q20
- 2. No → Continue with 19A 70% (39/56)

19A. Is anything being done to increase revenue?

→ Check *all* that apply

- 1. Nothing is being done. 9% (4/39)
- 2. State legislation is being amended to increase the level of offender fines. 23% (9/39)
- 3. Fine collection rates are being improved. 26% (10/39)
- 4. Additional state appropriations are being sought. 56% (22/39)
- 5. Work with prosecutors, state corrections' officials and/or judges is being done to ensure that restitution is ordered and collected from convicted offenders. 49% (19/39)
- 6. A system to track payments of restitution to the program is being established. 39% (15/39)
- 7. Other strategies are being used to boost revenues, please describe: _____

33%

(13/39)

Other strategies include:

- 1) Seeking funding from other sources (federal, local, philanthropy, etc.)
- 2) Localities are assuming more of the financial burden

19B. Is anything being done to contain costs?

→ Check *all* that apply

- 1. Nothing is being done. 13% (5/39)
- 2. Proposals are being funded at less than the full level requested. 64% (25/39)
- 3. Proposal selection criteria are being toughened so that fewer proposals are funded
15% (6/39)
- 4. Other strategies are being used to contain costs, please describe: _____
_____ 46% (18/39)

Other strategies:

- 1) Increase coordination efforts by funding sources to ensure that there is no duplication in funding
- 2) Identify other funding sources (use supplemental grants)
- 3) Maximize the use of funds by evaluating current funding recipients on the quality of their services

Underserved Populations

20.

In your opinion, are there certain categories of crime victims who receive assistance less frequently than expected based on known victimization rates?

→ Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes → Continue with 20A 79% (45/56)
- 2. No → Skip to Q21

20A. Who do you think may be under-utilizing assistance programs? Victims of:

→ Check *all* that apply

- 1. child physical abuse 36% (16/45)
- 2. child sexual abuse 31% (14/45)
- 3. DUI/DWI crashes 40% (18/45)
- 4. domestic violence 22% (10/45)
- 5. adult sexual assault 40% (18/45)
- 6. elder abuse 78% (35/45)
- 7. adults molested as children 27% (12/45)
- 8. survivors of homicide victims 40% (18/45)
- 9. Robbery 33% (15/45)
- 10. Assault 33% (15/45)
- 11. other violent crime 29% (13/45)
- 12. Stalking 42% (19/45)
- 13. hate or bias crimes 73% (33/45)
- 14. Terrorism 16% (7/45)
- 15. gang violence 47% (21/45)
- 16. property crimes such as fraud 58% (26/45)
- 17. other: _____ 7% (3/45)

20B. Why do you think that these victims may be under-utilizing assistance services?

→ Check *all* that apply

- 1. Embarrassment 71% (32/45)
- 2. fear of retaliation by offender 64% (29/45)
- 3. don't know about assistance programs they need 80% (36/45)
- 4. assistance programs can be hard to access (e.g. transportation barriers, child care problems, hours of operation inconvenient to victims) 49% (22/45)
- 5. believe assistance programs are only available to victims when the criminal justice system is involved 53% (24/45)
- 6. no assistance programs are available that address their specific victimization needs 53% (24/45)
- 7. mistrust of authority 40% (18/45)

- 8. provider has no space 22% (10/45)
- 9. other reasons, please specify: _____ 27% (12/45)

Other includes:

- 1) Inadequate victim service programs
- 2) Underreporting of crime / victim blaming
- 3) Lack of outreach by victim services
- 4) Lack of referrals by law enforcement and the medical community

21.

Some states report that there are groups, based on demographic or geographic characteristics, who under-utilize assistance programs. Is that true in your state?

→ Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes → Continue with 21A 89% (50/56)
- 2. No → Skip to Q22

21A. Which groups are under-utilizing the assistance services, given the demographics and/or victimization rates in your state?

→ Check *all* that apply

- 1. individuals with disabilities 62% (31/50)
- 2. ethnic/racial minorities 70% (35/50)
- 3. Females 10% (5/50)
- 4. Gays 62% (31/50)
- 5. Immigrants 56% (28/50)
- 6. Indian reservation residents 32% (16/50)
- 7. inner-city residents 22% (11/50)
- 8. Males 32% (16/50)
- 9. non-English speakers 64% (32/50)
- 10. remote/rural area residents 72% (36/50)
- 11. senior citizens 76% (38/50)
- 12. Teens 38% (19/50)
- 13. other groups, please specify: _____ 10% (5/50)

Victims' Rights

22.

What steps has your state taken to facilitate the implementation of victims' rights?

The following steps were popular among states seeking to facilitate the implementation of victims' rights:

- 1) Enactment of legislation / Constitutional Amendment / Victim Bill of Rights
- 2) Implementation of a victim notification system
- 3) Creation of victim advocacy programs
- 4) Providing legal representation for victims
- 5) Victim rights education initiatives and other outreach efforts

Coordination

23.

What mechanisms do you use to coordinate your office and the state compensation program?

→ Check *all* that apply

- 1. None 7% (4/56)
- 2. joint staff meetings 34% (19/56)
- 3. joint staff retreats 13% (7/56)
- 4. joint training conferences for compensation and assistance staff 45% (25/56)
- 5. Memorandum of Understanding defining how to coordinate 4% (2/56)
- 6. periodic written reports 9% (5/56)
- 7. reciprocal cross-training 25% (14/56)
- 8. regular joint administrator meetings 29% (16/56)
- 9. VOCA assistance administrator sits on Advisory Board for compensation program 18% (10/56)
- 10. VOCA compensation administrator or staff sit on victim assistance grant review panels 25% (14/56)
- 11. VOCA compensation administrator assists in planning process for distribution of assistance funds 21% (12/56)
- 12. VOCA assistance administrator or staff asked to review and comment on application forms, compensation statutes, rules, or other policy documents

32% (18/56)

- 13. invite compensation staff to train assistance subrecipients 59% (33/56)
- 14. assistance program staff aid the compensation program staff in planning outreach 25% (14/56)
- 15. Same agency or office 23% (13/56)
- 16. other mechanisms, please specify: _____
34% (19/56)

Other mechanisms:

- 1) Compensation and Assistance offices are in close proximity to each other, so there is a lot of informal coordination
- 2) Contact between the programs on an “as needed” basis
- 3) Joint performance and annual reporting forms

24.

Under VOCA, a victim assistance service program must comply with the requirement that they “assist potential recipients in seeking crime victim compensation benefits.” How do you ensure that the subrecipients are complying with this requirement?

→ Check all that apply

- 1. state provides training 70% (39/56)
- 2. state ensures ample supply of applications 63% (35/56)
- 3. state distributes brochures 71% (40/56)
- 4. state assistance programs check periodically with compensation administrator to see where applicants are coming from 39% (22/56)
- 5. site visits and monitoring 23% (13/56)
- 6. application and contract requirements 29% (16/56)
- 7. other ways, please specify: _____ 21% (12/56)

Other includes:

- 1) Monitor quarterly (or other) reports produced by the subrecipients
- 2) Training of subrecipients by members of the Compensation staff
- 3) Subrecipients must indicate that they have complied in case records

25.

Does anyone produce a state directory of service providers?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes → Continue with 25A 86% (48/56)
- 2. No → Skip to Q26

25A. What service providers are included in the directory?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. all providers 77% (37/48)
- 2. only VOCA funded providers 10% (5/48)
- 3. others, please specify: _____ 13% (6/48)

25B. How often is the directory updated?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. more often than once a year 8% (4/48)
- 2. once a year 52% (25/48)
- 3. less often than once a year 40% (19/48)

26.

Does your office provide the compensation program with a statewide directory of victim service providers, whether produced by your VOCA program or another organization?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes 73% (41/56)
- 2. No

27.

VOCA programs operate in the context of many other federal, state, and private non-profit funding sources intended to serve the needs of crime victims. The following questions are designed to help us understand the extent to which these funding streams are coordinated at the state level.

Does someone at the state level keep information on (i.e., track) the distribution of VOCA funds along with other federal and state funding for victim assistance, such as VAWA grants, CDC Sexual Assault grants, HHS Family Violence Prevention and Services (FVPSA) grants, VAIC grants (Victim Assistance in Indian Country), and state funding sources?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Yes, all grants for victim assistance are tracked together → Continue with 27A-C

34% (19/56)

2. Only some grants are tracked together; these are:

_____ → **Continue with 27A-D** 45% (25/56)

Popular grants tracked together include:

- 1) VOCA
- 2) VAWA
- 3) CDC
- 4) HHS

3. None of them are co-tracked → **Skip to 27C-D** 21% (12/56)

27A. What agency(ies) are responsible for keeping information on these funding streams?

→ **Check all that apply** (44/44)

1. my agency 84% (37/44)
2. state administrative or planning agency 18% (8/44)
3. Attorney General's Office 11% (5/44)
4. Criminal Justice Coordinating Council 2% (1/44)
5. Governor's Office 11% (5/44)
6. State Budget Office 7% (3/44)
7. State Human Services 9% (4/44)
8. don't know 5% (2/44)
9. other: _____ 16% (7/44)

27B. Please provide the name and phone number of a contact person at the agency(ies) that keep information on these funding streams: (44)

27C. How is the information that comes from these efforts (keeping information on funding streams and/or less formal information-sharing) used? (56)

→ **Check all that apply**

- 1. to identify duplications in services 75% (42/56)
- 2. to identify gaps in services 79% (44/56)
- 3. to make funding decisions 73% (41/56)
- 4. to coordinate service programs 71% (40/56)
- 5. to write a report to the state legislature or other office 32% (/56)
- 6. not really used 7% (/56)
- 7. other purposes: _____ 7% (4/56)

27D. If no formal system for keeping information on these funding streams is in place, are other means of information-sharing commonly used?

→ Check all that apply (37/56)

- 1. Lists of VOCA awards are distributed to: 83% (33/37)
 - 1. the VAWA administrator 94% (31/33)
 - 2. the CDC Sexual Assault grant administrator 42% (14/33)
 - 3. the HHS FVPSA grant administrator 49% (16/33)
 - 4. state fund administrators 58% (19/33)
 - 5. other: _____ 21% (7/33)
- 2. Lists of awards are received from: 70% (28/37)
 - 1. the VAWA administrator 93% (26/28)
 - 2. the CDC Sexual Assault grant administrator 39% (11/28)
 - 3. the HHS FVPSA grant administrator 43% (12/28)
 - 4. state fund administrators 46% (13/28)
 - 5. other: _____ 14% (4/28)
- 3. other information-sharing methods are used; describe: _____
 _____ 25% (9/37)
 Other methods include:
 - 1) Ad hoc planning meetings with other funding sources
 - 2) Serve on other advisory or review boards
 - 3) Publish grant information on web site
- 4. no other information-sharing methods are used 8% (3/37)

28.

What percent of victim assistance programs, or portions of programs, in the state are funded

with VOCA money during FY 1998?

_____ % 46% responded (26/56)

Average = 72%, Range = 10% - 100%

Don't know

29.

According to OVC information on your state for FY 1997, your agency also administered a total of \$ _____ in state funds for victim services. How much in additional state funding for victim services was available in 1997 and administered by other agencies?

→ List agency, if known, and the amount of state funding it administered

Agency	Amount of funding
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. don't know	

Average amount of state funds = \$5,678,067

Range = \$0 - \$82,850,694

- 1. Department of Health Average = \$247,916; 4% (2/56)
- 2. Department of Human Services Average = \$10,911,875; 4% (2/56)
- 3. Department of Health and Human Services Average = \$538,885; 4% (2/56)
- 4. Department of Social Services Average = \$119,470,000; 2% (1/56)
- 5. Attorney General Average = \$1,569,691; 4% (2/56)
- 6. Governor's office Average = \$2,631,025; 7%
- 7. Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Average=\$216,158,900; 2% (1/56)
- 8. Department of Aging Average = \$3,514,960; 2% (1/56)
- 9. Other Average = \$2,861,164; 4% (2/56)

30.

Have you sponsored statewide or regional meetings for subgrantees to get together and share their expertise?

→ Check one box that applies

1. Yes → Continue with 30A 77% (43/56)

2. No → **Skip to Q31**

30A. Were they:

→ **Check one box that applies**

1. Statewide 49% (21/43)
 2. Regional 7% (3/43)
 3. Both 44% (19/43)

30B. How often are meetings held?

→ **Check one box that applies**

1. Quarterly 16% (7/43)
 2. Annually 67% (29/43)
 3. Monthly 9% (4/43)
 4. As needed 7% (3/43)
 5. other: _____

30C. Who are the meetings for?

→ **Check all that apply**

1. VOCA grantees only 54% (23/43)
 2. all state grantees who receive victim assistance, regardless of the funding source (e.g., VAWA grantees) 77% (33/43)
 3. others, please specify: _____ 40% (17/43)

Others include:

- 1) Anyone interested in providing victim services
- 2) Any group receiving funds from VOCA
- 3) Criminal justice agencies
- 4) Healthcare / mental health providers

Program Evaluation and Accountability

31.

We are interested in finding out what sort of monitoring and evaluation efforts the state or

subrecipient programs are conducting, regardless of whether these efforts are being funded in whole or in part with VOCA assistance or with other funds.

31A. How does the state monitor subrecipients?

→ Check all that apply

- 1. annual site visits 48% (27/56)
- 2. site visits less frequent than annually 39% (22/56)
- 3. site visits more frequent than annually 29% (16/56)
- 4. telephone contacts between program monitors and subrecipients 91% (51/56)
- 5. written performance reports the subrecipients submit 96% (54/56)
- 6. victim satisfaction forms the subrecipients collect and submit 23% (13/56)
- 7. annual audit reports 71% (40/56)
- 8. subgrants to statewide domestic violence and/or sexual assault coalitions to monitor local programs (e.g., shelters or rape crisis centers) 23% (13/56)
- 9. use of the performance guidelines for a "Model Victim Assistance Program" prepared by the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) 5% (3/56)
- 10. performance guidelines developed by other organizations 16% (9/56)

31B. Has the state conducted or funded any evaluations in the last five years (besides any evaluations which subrecipients may fund from their awards):

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. yes → Check all that apply: 23% (13/56)
 - 1. on a state-wide level 54% (7/13)
 - 2. on a regional level 0%
 - 3. of individual assistance programs 69% (9/13)
- 2. no

31C. Have any subrecipients conducted or funded evaluations of their programs, in the last five years?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. yes -- Can you provide us with a copy of the final report? 21% (12/56)

Please send to: Ryan Allen
The Urban Institute
2100 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

- 2. No 39% (22/56)

3. don't know 39% (22/56)

32.

In your opinion, is it your job to assist subgrantees in fulfilling their grant responsibilities (e.g., complying with federal mandates such as referring victims to compensation and/or accomplishing other tasks for which they received the VOCA award)?

→ Check one box that applies

1. Yes → Continue with 32A 96% (54/56)
 2. No → Skip to Q33

32A. Please describe two ways you provide this assistance.

Methods include:

- 1) Offering training seminars or technical assistance
- 2) Performing site visits
- 3) Monitoring programs by reviewing their regular performance reports

33.

Since 1996, have you ever had to terminate a subgrantee for cause during the project period? Please note that we are not talking about deciding not to renew funding weak programs, but actually terminating during the grant period.

→ Check one box that applies

1. Yes → Continue with 33A 39% (22/56)
 2. No → Skip to Q34

33A. Approximately how many subgrantees have you terminated? _____

AVERAGE: 1.8

RANGE: 1-4

33B. What were the reasons for termination?

→ Check all that apply

1. noncompliance with reporting requirements 59% (13/22)
 2. not delivering promised services 64% (14/22)
 3. program went bankrupt 9% (2/22)

4. other reasons, please explain: _____ 36% (8/22)

Other reasons include:

- 1) False reporting / double billing
- 2) Organization switched from non-profit to for-profit

Interaction with the Federal Government

34.

Has staff from any of your subgrantees attended the OVC-sponsored National Victim Assistance Academy in FY 1998?

→ Check *one* box that applies

1. Yes → Continue with 34A 61% (34/56)
2. No → Skip to Q35

34A. How many subgrantees attended? _____

Average: 3.1

Range: 1-15

35.

What OVC training and technical assistance resources has your state used?

35A. For each resource you've used, how helpful was it?

→ Rate each option according to the scale:

1 = not very helpful

2 = moderately helpful

3 = extremely helpful

	Not very helpful	Moderately helpful	Extremely helpful
1. _____	1	2	3
2. _____	1	2	3
3. _____	1	2	3
4. _____	1	2	3
5. _____	1	2	3

Other OVC training and technical assistance resources include:

- 1) OVC Resource Center 19% (11/56) Average Rating = 2.6

2) OVC Website	5% (3/56)	Average Rating = 2.7
3) VOCA Conferences / trainings	34% (19/56)	Average Rating = 2.9
4) NOVA Conferences / trainings	7% (4/56)	Average Rating = 3.0
5) National Victims' Assistance Academy	5% (3/56)	Average Rating = 3.0
6) OVC Training/Technical Assistance Center	21% (12/56)	Average Rating = 2.7
7) OVC staff/site visits	20% (11/56)	Average Rating = 2.8
8) OVC Mentor Program	4% (2/56)	Average Rating = 3.0
9) National Crime Victim's Resource Center	7% (4/56)	Average Rating = 2.5
10) Publications/brochures	7% (4/56)	Average Rating = 2.5
11) NOVA technical assistance	4% (2/56)	Average Rating = 2.5
12) NCJRS	2% (1/56)	Average Rating = 3.0
13) General conferences / training	4% (2/56)	Average Rating = 3.0
14) Other	7% (4/56)	Average Rating = 3.0

36.

Has your office used the OVC Resource Center?

→ Check *one* box that applies

- 1. Yes → Continue with 36A 54% (30/56)
- 2. No → Skip to Q37

36A. How helpful was it?

→ Check *one* box that applies

- 1. very helpful 70% (21/30)
- 2. somewhat helpful 27% (8/30)
- 3. not very helpful 3% (1/30)

37.

How often do you require subrecipients to submit information necessary for completion of the state performance report?

→ Check one box that applies

- 1. Monthly 13% (7/56)
- 2. Quarterly 52% (29/56)
- 3. Biannually 11% (6/56)
- 4. Annually 18% (10/56)
- 5. other, please specify: _____ 7% (4/56)

38.

We are interested in your feedback on OVC's reporting forms, the Subgrant Award Report and the State Performance Report.

38A. How are the data you collect for these reports useful to you?

→ Check all that apply

- 1. for public education 32% (18/56)
- 2. for annual reporting to the executive 41% (23/56)
- 3. for legislative reporting and responding to requests 57% (32/56)
- 4. for assessing patterns in funding and addressing gaps or duplications 59% (33/56)
- 5. for assessing programs' levels of success 52% (29/56)
- 6. other: _____ 18% (10/56)

Other includes:

- 1) Not useful
- 2) Assists in monitoring subgrantees
- 3) Assists in monitoring victims served

38B. How would you improve the reporting forms?

→ Check all that apply

- 1. clarify the instructions on: _____ 9% (5/56)
- 2. change the narrative questions to more structured response formats 27% (15/56)
- 3. change the definitions of these types of services: _____ 5% (3/56)
- _____
- 4. eliminate the questions on: _____ 2% (1/56)
- 5. add questions on: _____ 7% (4/56)
- 6. Nothing 5% (3/56)

7. other: _____ 63% (35/56)

Other:

- 1) Make the definitions more specific (definitions lack consistency across states) and include more examples for the types of victimization.
- 2) Eliminate duplication of data regarding the subgrant award report and fiscal information collected by the controller's office
- 3) Remove the reporting requirement

39.

Do you have any specific suggestions for changing OVC assistance guidelines or even the VOCA legislation itself, to better serve crime victims in your state?

→ Check one box that applies

1. Yes: _____
_____ 61% (34/56)

2. No

From the 34 respondents who said "yes," some of the suggestions include:

- 1) Broaden the use of VOCA funds (e.g., prevention, overhead costs, batterer programs)
- 2) Clarify and simplify guidelines
- 3) Increase the allowable amount of funds for administrative purposes
- 4) Discontinue the matching requirement for training funds / change the matching requirement so that the match funding does not have to be from a direct service

40.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your state's VOCA assistance program or the federal VOCA program that we haven't yet covered?

→ Check one box that applies

1. Yes: _____
_____ 25% (14/56)

Some responses include:

- 1) Fluctuations in funding presents a continual problem. congressional appropriations or another tactic to smooth funding levels might be appropriate.
- 2) SAR reporting is slow and cumbersome.
- 3) Mailings from OVC are too numerous and of marginal value. A “Frequently Asked Questions” piece on the more complex guidelines may be necessary.

2. No

41.

What would you like to see changed in your state’s compensation program, or in OVC’s program guidelines, to better meet the needs of crime victims?

→ Check all that apply

1. it should be expanded to cover these additional types of losses:

_____ 20% (11/56)

Other types of losses include:

- 1) Secondary victims
- 2) Some property crime losses
- 3) Victim’s cost of going to court

2. it should put more emphasis on victims of these types of crime:

_____ 11% (6/56)

3. it should put more emphasis on these groups of victims:

_____ 5% (3/56)

4. overall and/or categorical payment caps should be raised 25% (14/56)

5. the criminal justice reporting requirement should be eliminated 11% (6/56)

6. the amount of paperwork required of claimants should be reduced 23% (13/56)

7. other: _____ 64%
(36/56)

Other includes:

- 1) Expedite processing of compensation claims
- 2) Increase coordination between Assistance and Compensation offices (possibly manage both in the same system).
- 3) Increase percentage of funds available for administrative use

Thank you for your time

Appendix H

VOCA Assistance Program Client Survey

Contact Log:

Contact Attempt	Date	Day of wk	Time	Interviewer	Outcome
Attempt #1					
Attempt #2					
Attempt #3					
Attempt #4					
Attempt #5					

Interview start time: _____ Stop time: _____ Length: _____ minutes

Name of Client: _____ Phone #: _____ (home)
 _____ (work)

Interviewer Note: We are interviewing the victim service program client, who may or may not also be the direct or primary victim of the crime. Do not interview anyone under the age of 18. When the victim is underage, the client is likely to be a parent, guardian, or other person of legal age. Verify the respondent's majority status below. Verify the client received services (more than an unsolicited letter).

- Check here to confirm client is 18 or older - **DO NOT INTERVIEW IF UNDER 18**
- Check here to confirm client did receive services - **DO NOT INTERVIEW IF NOT SERVED**

Interviewer Note: Use the information listed below for the questions or statements in boldface throughout the survey. This information is from the program's sampling logs or other program-supplied database. Only ask the client for information NOT available from the program.

Page 2: State: _____ Program: _____

Q4: Pre-consent yes – read optional wording provided
 no – ignore optional wording

Q3-Q28 & Q57 & Q60-Q62 & Q67-Q70 : Primary victim?
 yes – ignore optional wording related to who victim is
 no – read optional wording related to who victim is

Q39: Law enforcement-based program?
 yes – check yes for #39 without asking question
 no or information not available – ask #39

Q56: Type of Crime:

<input type="checkbox"/> Child physical and/or sexual abuse	<input type="checkbox"/> Domestic/family abuse
<input type="checkbox"/> Adult sexual assault	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult survivor of child abuse
<input type="checkbox"/> DUI/DWI	<input type="checkbox"/> Homicide
<input type="checkbox"/> Physical assault (non-domestic)	<input type="checkbox"/> Robbery or burglary
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial exploitation (e.g., fraud)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

STATE: _____

How the Client Learned About the Program

I'd like to find out how you first started getting help from the _____
 program. (write program name here – code)

(n=594)

1. Did you know about the program before the crime was committed?

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> yes (skip to #2) | 29.5% (175/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> no (proceed to #1A) | 70.5% (419/594) |

(n=419)

1A. When did you first find out about the program? Was it...(read— check only one)

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> the <u>same day or night</u> the crime was committed | 16.7% (70/419) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> <u>less than 1 week</u> after the crime | 33.7% (141/419) |
| (3) <input type="checkbox"/> between 1 week and 1 month | 23.6% (99/419) |
| (4) <input type="checkbox"/> between 1 and 3 months | 7.2% (30/419) |
| (5) <input type="checkbox"/> between 3 and 6 months | 4.3% (18/419) |
| (6) <input type="checkbox"/> more than <u>six months</u> after the crime | 10.7% (45/419) |
| (7) <input type="checkbox"/> skipped | 0.2% (1/419) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> don't know | 3.6% (15/419) |

(n=594)

2. We'd like to know how you found out about the program, did any of following make you aware of the program?(read — check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>law enforcement</u> (police, sheriff, staff of a law enforcement agency) | 19.0% (113/594) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>prosecutor/solicitor's office</u> | 8.1% (48/594) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>court system</u> (judge, clerk, other court staff) | 6.4% (38/594) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>corrections</u> (jail, prison, probation, or parole personnel or other corrections staff) | 2.5% (15/594) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>victims' compensation program</u> | 1.2% (7/594) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>victim service program, hotline, or religious organization</u> other than _____ staff (also includes counseling groups and social service agencies) | 12.3% (73/594) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>health care provider or funeral home</u> (hospital, doctor's office, medical clinic staff) | 6.6% (39/594) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>advertisements</u> (_____ program's ads, posters, billboards, brochures, public service announcements, phone book listing, or Internet web page) | 12.0% (71/594) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> the _____ <u>program contacted you directly</u> (with a visit, letter, or phone call) | 28.5% (169/594) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>family, friend, coworker, schoolmate, or neighbor</u> | 19.5% (116/594) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>other, please specify:</u> _____ | 2.9% (17/594) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>don't know</u> | 1.5% (9/594) |

16.5% (98/594) reported more than one referral source

(n=594)

3. When did you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) start getting help from the program? Was it...(read — check only one)

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> within a <u>day or two</u> of the crime (<i>for crimes that have occurred repeatedly, this means the first incident</i>) | 17.8% (106/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> <u>less than 1 week</u> after the crime | 23.6% (140/594) |
| (3) <input type="checkbox"/> between <u>1 week and 1 month</u> | 27.9% (166/594) |
| (4) <input type="checkbox"/> between <u>1 and 3 months</u> | 10.9% (65/594) |
| (5) <input type="checkbox"/> between <u>3 and 6 months</u> | 4.7% (28/594) |
| (6) <input type="checkbox"/> more than <u>six months</u> after the crime | 11.1% (66/594) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>don't know</i> | 3.9% (23/594) |

(n=594)

4. When was your (*or the victim's/your daughter's/your son's/her/his/etc.*) most recent contact (by phone, letter, or in-person) with the program (*For pre-consents only: not including any contact about participating in this research*)? Was it... (*read — check only one*)

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> less than a month ago | 31.0% (184/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> between <u>1 and 3 months</u> ago | 20.2% (120/594) |
| (3) <input type="checkbox"/> between <u>3 and 6 months</u> ago | 21.4% (127/594) |
| (4) <input type="checkbox"/> more than <u>6 months</u> ago | 26.3% (156/594) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>don't know</i> | 1.2 % (7/594) |

(n=594)

5. For how long did you (*or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.*) get help or have you gotten help from the program? Was it ...(*read — check only one*)

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> one week or less | 14.0% (83/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> one week to one month | 10.6% (63/594) |
| (3) <input type="checkbox"/> between 1 to 3 months | 19.2% (114/594) |
| (4) <input type="checkbox"/> more than 3 months up to 6 months | 13.3% (79/594) |
| (5) <input type="checkbox"/> more than 6 months | 38.4% (228/594) |
| (7) <input type="checkbox"/> skipped by the Interviewer (but should have been asked) | 0.2% (1/594) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> not applicable | 1.2% (7/594) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> don't know | 3.2% (19/594) |

(n=594)

6. Would you say that you (*or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.*)... (*read — check only one*)

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> are (is) <u>still getting help</u> from the _____ program (<i>skip to Services Needed and Received</i>) | 33.0% (196/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> have (has) <u>stopped getting help</u> but expect(s) to <u>get help again</u> in the future (<i>skip to Services Needed and Received</i>) | 27.8% (165/594) |
| (3) <input type="checkbox"/> have (has) <u>stopped getting help</u> and <u>don't (doesn't) expect to get help again</u> (<i>proceed to #7</i>) | 36.9% (219/594) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> not applicable | 0.3% (2/594) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>don't know (skip to Services Needed and Received)</i> | 2.0% (12/594) |

(n=219)

7. Why have (has) you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) stopped getting services from the program? (**prompt — check all that apply**)

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| A. <input type="checkbox"/> services no longer needed/useful | 84.5% (185/219) |
| B. <input type="checkbox"/> no time for it | 1.7% (4/219) |
| C. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>someone</u> (family or friend) <u>thought you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) should stop</u> getting services from them | 0.5% (1/219) |
| D. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>help</u> needed not provided | 2.7% (6/219) |
| E. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>the people</u> there were hard to deal with | 1.8% (4/219) |
| F. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>services weren't helping</u> | 3.7% (8/219) |
| G. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>waiting lists</u> were too long | 0.0% (0/219) |
| H. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>hours not convenient</u> | 0.9% (2/219) |
| I. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>location not convenient</u> | 2.3% (5/219) |
| J. <input type="checkbox"/> services too <u>expensive</u> | 0.0% (0/219) |
| K. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>language or cultural barriers</u> | 0.0% (0/219) |
| L. <input type="checkbox"/> <u>child care unavailable</u> | 0.0% (0/219) |
| M. <input type="checkbox"/> scheduling conflicts with work or school | 0.9% (2/219) |
| N. <input type="checkbox"/> victim moved away | 2.7% (6/219) |
| O. <input type="checkbox"/> other | 2.3% (5/219) |
| P. <input type="checkbox"/> don't know | 2.3% (5/219) |

11.4% (25/219) gave more than one reason — most often "services no longer needed/useful"

Services Needed and Received

Now I'd like to ask you about what kinds of help you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) needed after the crime, and what help you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) got from the _____ program, as well as from other sources. These other sources may include:

- another victim service, hotline, social service, counseling, or religious organization
- health care providers including a doctor, nurse, clinic, or hospital
- the police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole
- family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates, or other personal acquaintances
- assistance through employment
- or other sources of help.

Basically, we are interested in knowing about anybody who did or could have provided you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/her/him/etc.) help. As I ask you about any needs you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) may have had, some may not apply to you (or her/him) so please bear with me as I need to get your response to each of the following questions.

Note to interviewer: If the respondent answers "yes" to any of the following questions (#8-#27) but "no one" to the corresponding question about who provided the help (#8a-#27a, respectively), ask question #28. In other words, if there was any type of help that the respondent needed but did not get from anyone, ask question #28. Otherwise, skip to question #29.

(n=594)

8. Did you need help figuring out what services you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) needed and how to get them?

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>yes (proceed to #8A)</i> | 58.4% (347/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no (skip to #9)</i> | 41.1% (244/594) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>not applicable (skip to #9)</i> | 0.5% (3/594) |

(n=347)

8A. Who helped with this? (*prompt* — *check all that apply*)

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| A. <input type="checkbox"/> no one | 1.2% (4/347) |
| B. <input type="checkbox"/> the _____ program | 67.7% (235/347) |
| C. <input type="checkbox"/> another victim service, hotline or religious organization (social service, counseling) | 17.3% (60/347) |
| D. <input type="checkbox"/> health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, hospital) | 5.2% (18/347) |
| E. <input type="checkbox"/> criminal justice system (police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole) | 17.0% (59/347) |
| F. <input type="checkbox"/> family, friends or other personal acquaintances (neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates) | 18.2% (63/347) |
| G. <input type="checkbox"/> employee assistance | 1.4% (5/347) |
| H. <input type="checkbox"/> other, please specify: _____ | 1.7% (6/347) |
| I. <input type="checkbox"/> <i>don't know/refused</i> | 0.0% (0/347) |

20.7% (72/347) reported more than one help source

(n=594)

9. Did you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) need emotional support (someone to listen and talk to)?

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>yes (proceed to #9A)</i> | 74.1% (440/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no (skip to #10)</i> | 25.8% (153/594) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>not applicable (skip to #10)</i> | 0.2% (1/594) |

(n=440)

9A. Who provided the support? (*prompt* — *check all that apply*)

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| A. <input type="checkbox"/> no one | 2.3% (10/440) |
| B. <input type="checkbox"/> the _____ program | 67.0% (295/440) |
| C. <input type="checkbox"/> another victim service, hotline or religious organization (social service, counseling) | 22.0% (97/440) |
| D. <input type="checkbox"/> health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, hospital) | 6.9% (26/440) |
| E. <input type="checkbox"/> criminal justice system (police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole) | 5.2% (23/440) |
| F. <input type="checkbox"/> family, friends or other personal acquaintances (neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates) | 37.7% (166/440) |
| G. <input type="checkbox"/> employee assistance | 0.9% (4/440) |
| H. <input type="checkbox"/> other, please specify: _____ | 0.2% (1/440) |

- I. *don't know/refused* **0.0% (0/440)**
32.7% (144/440) reported more than one help source

(n=594)

10. Did you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) need a support group with other victims of crime?

- (1) *yes (proceed to #10A)* **26.4% (157/594)**
 (2) *no (skip to #11)* **72.4% (430/594)**
 (8) *not applicable (skip to #11)* **1.2% (7/594)**

(n=156)

10A. Who provided the support group? (*prompt* — *check all that apply*)

- A. no one **9.0% (14/156)**
 B. the _____ program **75.6% (118/156)**
 C. another victim service, hotline or religious organization (social service, counseling) **16.7% (26/156)**
 D. health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, hospital) **1.9% (3/156)**
 E. criminal justice system (police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole) **1.3% (2/156)**
 F. family, friends or other personal acquaintances (neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates) **2.6% (4/156)**
 G. employee assistance **0.6% (1/156)**
 H. other, please specify: _____ **1.3% (2/156)**
 I. *don't know/refused* **0.0% (0/156)**

9.0% (14/156) reported more than one help source

(n=594)

11. Did you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) need professional therapy or counseling?

- (1) *yes (proceed to #11A)* **45.5% (270/594)**
 (2) *no (skip to #12)* **55.0% (321/594)**
 (8) *not applicable (skip to #12)* **0.5% (3/594)**

(n=270)

11A. Who provided the support? (*prompt* — *check all that apply*)

- A. no one **4.8% (13/270)**
 B. the _____ program **40.0% (108/270)**
 C. another victim service, hotline or religious organization (social service, counseling) **41.5% (112/270)**
 D. health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, hospital) **23.3% (63/270)**
 E. criminal justice system (police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole) **1.9% (5/270)**
 F. family, friends or other personal acquaintances (neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates) **3.7% (10/270)**
 G. employee assistance **3.0% (8/270)**
 H. other, please specify: _____ **0.4% (1/270)**

- I. *don't know/refused* 0.4% (1/270)
18.1% (49/270) reported more than one help source

(n=594)

12. Did you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) need information or help with the police or a criminal court case?
- (1) *yes (proceed to #12A)* 54.9% (326/594)
(2) *no (skip to #13)* 44.3% (263/594)
(7) *skipped by the Interviewer (but should have been asked)* 0.2% (1/594)
(8) *not applicable (skip to #13)* 0.7% (4/594)

(n=326)

- 12A. Who provided the support? (*prompt — check all that apply*)
- A. no one 3.4% (11/326)
B. the _____ program 71.2% (232/326)
C. another victim service, hotline or religious organization (social service, counseling) 4.0% (13/326)
D. health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, hospital) 2.1% (7/326)
E. criminal justice system (police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole) 34.7% (113/326)
F. family, friends or other personal acquaintances (neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates) 4.6% (15/326)
G. employee assistance 0.6% (2/326)
H. other, please specify: _____ 4.3% (14/326)
I. *don't know/refused* 0.0% (0/326)
21.5% (70/326) reported more than one help source

(n=594)

13. Did you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) need information or help with a civil court case (such as divorce, child-related matters, etc.) because of the crime?
- (1) *yes (proceed to #13A)* 22.6% (134/594)
(2) *no (skip to #14)* 74.1% (440/594)
(8) *not applicable (skip to #14)* 3.4% (20/594)

(n=134)

- 13A. Who provided the support? (*prompt — check all that apply*)
- A. no one 6.7% (9/134)
B. the _____ program 55.2% (74/134)
C. another victim service, hotline or religious organization (social service, counseling) 6.0% (8/134)
D. health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, hospital) 0.7% (1/134)
E. criminal justice system (police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole) 20.9% (28/134)
F. family, friends or other personal acquaintances (neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates) 3.7% (5/134)

- G. employee assistance 0.7% (1/134)
- H. attorney 20.1% (27/134)
- I. *don't know/refused* 0.7% (1/134)

14.9% (20/134) reported more than one help source

(n=594)

14. Did you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) need help planning how to stay safe (such as information on self-defense or how to recognize danger, or change locks, fix broken doors or windows, etc.)?
- (1) *yes (proceed to #14A)* 29.1% (173/594)
 - (2) *no (skip to #15)* 69.7% (414/594)
 - (8) *not applicable (skip to #15)* 1.2% (7/594)

(n=173)

- 14A. Who provided the support? (*prompt — check all that apply*)
- A. no one 6.9% (12/173)
 - B. the _____ program 63.0% (109/173)
 - C. another victim service, hotline or religious organization (social service, counseling) 13.3% (23/173)
 - D. health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, hospital) 1.2% (2/173)
 - E. criminal justice system (police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole) 19.1% (33/173)
 - F. family, friends or other personal acquaintances (neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates) 16.8% (29/173)
 - G. employee assistance 1.2% (2/173)
 - H. other, please specify: _____ 2.3% (4/173)
 - I. *don't know/refused* 0.6% (1/173)

20.2% (35/173) reported more than one help source

(n=594)

15. Did you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) need help with household chores, shopping, or transportation?
- (1) *yes (proceed to #15A)* 21.2% (126/594)
 - (2) *no (skip to #16)* 77.4% (460/594)
 - (8) *not applicable (skip to #16)* 1.3% (8/594)

(n=125)

- 15A. Who provided the support? (*prompt — check all that apply*)
- A. no one 5.6% (7/125)
 - B. the _____ program 24.0% (30/125)
 - C. another victim service, hotline or religious organization (social service, counseling) 8.0% (10/125)
 - D. health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, hospital) 4.0% (5/125)

- E. criminal justice system (police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole) **4.0% (5/125)**
 - F. family, friends or other personal acquaintances (neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates) **58.4% (73/125)**
 - G. employee assistance **1.6% (2/125)**
 - H. other, please specify: _____ **1.6% (2/125)**
 - I. *don't know/refused* **0.8% (1/125)**
- 6.4% (8/125) reported more than one help source**

(n=594)

16. Did you (*or* the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) need help getting emergency needs for food, housing, clothes, etc.?
- (1) *yes (proceed to #16A)* **15.3% (91/594)**
 - (2) *no (skip to #17)* **83.3% (495/594)**
 - (8) *not applicable (skip to #17)* **1.3% (8/594)**

(n=91)

- 16A. Who provided the support? (*prompt — check all that apply*)
- A. no one **6.6% (6/91)**
 - B. the _____ program **46.2% (42/91)**
 - C. another victim service, hotline or religious organization (social service, counseling) **36.3% (33/91)**
 - D. health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, hospital) **1.1% (1/91)**
 - E. criminal justice system (police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole) **3.3% (3/91)**
 - F. family, friends or other personal acquaintances (neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates) **20.9% (19/91)**
 - G. employee assistance **3.3% (3/91)**
 - H. state or federal benefits program **3.3% (3/91)**
 - I. other, please specify: _____ **1.1% (1/91)**
 - J. *don't know/refused* **0.0% (0/91)**

19.8% (18/91) reported more than one help source(n=594)

17. Did you (*or* the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) need help getting financial assistance like welfare, food stamps, unemployment, etc.?
- (1) *yes (proceed to #17A)* **15.3% (91/594)**
 - (2) *no (skip to #18)* **83.2% (494/594)**
 - (8) *not applicable (skip to #18)* **1.5% (9/594)**

(n=91)

- 17A. Who provided the support? (*prompt — check all that apply*)
- A. no one **12.1% (11/91)**
 - B. the _____ program **46.2% (42/91)**
 - C. another victim service, hotline or religious organization (social service, counseling) **34.1% (31/91)**

- D. health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, hospital) 1.1% (1/91)
- E. criminal justice system (police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole) 4.4% (4/91)
- F. family, friends or other personal acquaintances (neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates) 12.1% (11/91)
- G. employee assistance 2.2% (2/91)
- H. other, please specify: _____ 4.4% (4/91)
- I. *don't know/refused* 0.0% (0/91)

16.5% (15/91) reported more than one help source

(n=594)

18. Did you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) need help getting transitional or permanent housing (beyond emergency shelter)?

- (1) *yes (proceed to #18A)* 9.1% (54/594)
- (2) *no (skip to #19)* 89.4% (531/594)
- (8) *not applicable (skip to #19)* 1.5% (9/594)

(n=54)

18A. Who provided the support? (*prompt* — *check all that apply*)

- A. no one 13.0% (7/54)
- B. the _____ program 53.7% (29/54)
- C. another victim service, hotline or religious organization (social service, counseling) 16.7% (9/54)
- D. health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, hospital) 0.0% (0/54)
- E. criminal justice system (police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole) 0.0% (0/54)
- F. family, friends or other personal acquaintances (neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates) 12.2% (12/54)
- G. employee assistance 0.0% (0/54)
- H. other, please specify: _____ 3.7% (2/54)
- I. *don't know/refused* 0.0% (0/54)

9.3% (5/54) reported more than one help source

(n=594)

19. Did you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) need help with your children, such as childcare, getting services for kids, working with the kids' school, etc.?

- (1) *yes (proceed to #19A)* 14.3% (85/594)
- (2) *no (skip to #20)* 82.7% (491/594)
- (8) *not applicable (skip to #20)* 3.0% (18/594)

(n=84)

19A. Who provided the support? (*prompt* — *check all that apply*)

- A. no one 11.9% (10/84)
- B. the _____ program 38.1% (32/84)
- C. another victim service, hotline or religious organization (social service, counseling)

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| | 26.2% (22/84) |
| D. <input type="checkbox"/> health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, hospital) | 3.6% (3/84) |
| E. <input type="checkbox"/> criminal justice system (police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole) | 2.4% (2/84) |
| F. <input type="checkbox"/> family, friends or other personal acquaintances (neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates) | 27.4% (23/84) |
| G. <input type="checkbox"/> employee assistance | 1.2% (1/84) |
| H. <input type="checkbox"/> school-linked service | 3.6% (3/84) |
| I. <input type="checkbox"/> other, please specify: _____ | 1.2% (1/84) |
| J. <input type="checkbox"/> <i>don't know/refused</i> | 0.0% (0/84) |

13.1% (11/84) reported more than one help source

(n=594)

20. Did you (*or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.*) need help with issues related to your job or school?

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>yes (proceed to #20A)</i> | 15.8% (94/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no (skip to #21)</i> | 83.0% (493/594) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>not applicable (skip to #21)</i> | 1.2% (7/594) |

(n=94)

20A. Who provided the support? (*prompt — check all that apply*)

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| A. <input type="checkbox"/> no one | 12.8% (12/94) |
| B. <input type="checkbox"/> the _____ program | 38.3% (36/94) |
| C. <input type="checkbox"/> another victim service, hotline or religious organization (social service, counseling) | 25.5% (24/94) |
| D. <input type="checkbox"/> health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, hospital) | 4.3% (4/94) |
| E. <input type="checkbox"/> criminal justice system (police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole) | 5.3% (5/94) |
| F. <input type="checkbox"/> family, friends or other personal acquaintances (neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates) | 22.3% (21/94) |
| G. <input type="checkbox"/> employee assistance | 5.3% (5/94) |
| H. <input type="checkbox"/> school | 5.3% (5/94) |
| I. <input type="checkbox"/> attorney | 2.1% (2/94) |
| J. <input type="checkbox"/> other, please specify: _____ | 9.6% (9/94) |
| K. <input type="checkbox"/> <i>don't know/refused</i> | 1.1% (1/94) |

20.2% reported more than one help source

(n=594)

21. Did you (*or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.*) need help with medical exams or treatments?

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>yes (proceed to #21A)</i> | 18.5% (110/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no (skip to #22)</i> | 80.1% (476/594) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>not applicable (skip to #22)</i> | 1.3% (8/594) |

(n=109)

21A. Who provided the support? (*prompt* — *check all that apply*)

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| A. <input type="checkbox"/> no one | 6.4% (7/109) |
| B. <input type="checkbox"/> the _____ program | 36.7% (40/109) |
| C. <input type="checkbox"/> another victim service, hotline or religious organization (social service, counseling) | 15.6% (17/109) |
| D. <input type="checkbox"/> health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, hospital) | 39.4% (43/109) |
| E. <input type="checkbox"/> criminal justice system (police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole) | 2.8% (3/109) |
| F. <input type="checkbox"/> family, friends or other personal acquaintances (neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates) | 17.4% (19/109) |
| G. <input type="checkbox"/> employee assistance | 0.9% (1/109) |
| H. <input type="checkbox"/> insurance | 5.5% (6/109) |
| I. <input type="checkbox"/> other, please specify: _____ | 0.9% (1/109) |
| J. <input type="checkbox"/> <i>don't know/refused</i> | 0.0% (0/109) |

23.9% reported more than one source

(n=594)

22. Did you (*or* the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) need help dealing with people or companies you owed money to?

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>yes (proceed to #22A)</i> | 14.3% (85/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no (skip to #23)</i> | 84.2% (500/594) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>not applicable (skip to #23)</i> | 1.5% (9/594) |

(n=85)

22A. Who provided the support? (*prompt* — *check all that apply*)

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| A. <input type="checkbox"/> no one | 22.4% (19/85) |
| B. <input type="checkbox"/> the _____ program | 30.6% (26/85) |
| C. <input type="checkbox"/> another victim service, hotline or religious organization (social service, counseling) | 15.3% (13/85) |
| D. <input type="checkbox"/> health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, hospital) | 0.0% (0/85) |
| E. <input type="checkbox"/> criminal justice system (police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole) | 3.5% (3/85) |
| F. <input type="checkbox"/> family, friends or other personal acquaintances (neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates) | 20.0% (17/85) |
| G. <input type="checkbox"/> employee assistance | 1.2% (1/85) |
| H. <input type="checkbox"/> attorney | 16.5% (14/85) |
| I. <input type="checkbox"/> other, please specify: _____ | 4.7% (4/85) |
| J. <input type="checkbox"/> <i>don't know/refused</i> | 0.0% (0/85) |

12.9% reported more than one help source

(n=594)

23. Did you (*or* the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) need help dealing with your insurance company?

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>yes (proceed to #23A)</i> | 9.8% (58/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no (skip to #24)</i> | 88.7% (527/594) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>not applicable (skip to #24)</i> | 1.5% (9/594) |

(n=58)

- 23A. Who provided the support? (*prompt* — *check all that apply*)
- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| A. <input type="checkbox"/> no one | 19.0% (11/58) |
| B. <input type="checkbox"/> the _____ program | 22.4% (13/58) |
| C. <input type="checkbox"/> another victim service, hotline or religious organization (social service, counseling) | 10.3% (6/58) |
| D. <input type="checkbox"/> health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, hospital) | 1.7% (1/58) |
| E. <input type="checkbox"/> criminal justice system (police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole) | 22.4% (13/58) |
| F. <input type="checkbox"/> family, friends or other personal acquaintances (neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates) | 13.8% (8/58) |
| G. <input type="checkbox"/> employee assistance | 3.4% (2/58) |
| H. <input type="checkbox"/> attorney | 17.2% (10/58) |
| I. <input type="checkbox"/> other, please specify: _____ | 1.7% (1/58) |
| J. <input type="checkbox"/> <i>don't know/refused</i> | 1.7% (1/58) |

10.3% (6/58) reported more than one help source

(n=594)

24. Did you (*or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.*) need translation or interpretation services?

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>yes (proceed to #24A)</i> | 4.2% (25/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no (skip to #25)</i> | 92.9% (552/594) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>not applicable (skip to #25)</i> | 2.9% (17/594) |

(n=25)

- 24A. Who provided the support? (*prompt* — *check all that apply*)
- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| A. <input type="checkbox"/> no one | 0.0% (0/25) |
| B. <input type="checkbox"/> the _____ program | 68.0% (17/25) |
| C. <input type="checkbox"/> another victim service, hotline or religious organization (social service, counseling) | 4.0% (1/25) |
| D. <input type="checkbox"/> health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, hospital) | 0.0% (0/25) |
| E. <input type="checkbox"/> criminal justice system (police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole) | 16.0% (4/25) |
| F. <input type="checkbox"/> family, friends or other personal acquaintances (neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates) | 16.0% (4/25) |
| G. <input type="checkbox"/> employee assistance | 0.0% (0/25) |
| H. <input type="checkbox"/> other, please specify: _____ | 0.0% (0/25) |
| I. <input type="checkbox"/> <i>don't know/refused</i> | 0.0% (0/25) |

4% (1/25) reported more than one help source

(n=594)

25. Did you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) need help with your use or someone else's use of alcohol or drugs?

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>yes (proceed to #25A)</i> | 10.6% (63/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no (skip to #26)</i> | 86.9% (516/594) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>not applicable (skip to #26)</i> | 2.5% (15/594) |

(n=63)

25A. Who provided the support? (*prompt — check all that apply*)

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| A. <input type="checkbox"/> no one | 9.5% (6/63) |
| B. <input type="checkbox"/> the _____ program | 31.7% (20/63) |
| C. <input type="checkbox"/> another victim service, hotline or religious organization (social service, counseling) | 46.0% (29/63) |
| D. <input type="checkbox"/> health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, hospital) | 9.5% (6/63) |
| E. <input type="checkbox"/> criminal justice system (police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole) | 4.8% (3/63) |
| F. <input type="checkbox"/> family, friends or other personal acquaintances (neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates) | 4.8% (3/63) |
| G. <input type="checkbox"/> employee assistance | 0.0% (0/63) |
| H. <input type="checkbox"/> other, please specify: _____ | 0.0% (0/63) |
| I. <input type="checkbox"/> <i>don't know/refused</i> | 1.6% (1/63) |

7.9% (5/63) reported more than one help source

(n=594)

26. Did you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) need any other type of help?

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>yes: spiritual help</i> | 0.3% (2/594) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> help with sexual assault | 0.3% (2/594) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> legal/community activism | 0.2% (1/594) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> help with the move | 0.2% (1/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no (skip to #28)</i> | 98.0% (582/594) |
| (7) <input type="checkbox"/> Skipped by the Interviewer (but should have been asked) | 0.2% (1/594) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>not applicable (skip to #28)</i> | 0.8% (5/594) |

(n=6)

27. Did you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) need any other type of help?

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>yes, please specify: _____ (proceed to #27A)</i> | 0% (0/6) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no (skip to #28)</i> | 83.3% (5/6) |
| (7) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>skipped</i> | 16.7% (1/6) |

(n=92)

28. It seems like there was some help you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) needed but didn't get. Was this the case?

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>yes (proceed to #28A)</i> | 15.2% (90/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no (proceed to #28A)</i> | 84.8% (504/594) |

Of the 90 who needed at least one type of help but did not receive it:

- 57.8% (52/90) needed one type of help they did not receive
- 24.4% (22/90) needed two types of help they did not receive
- 17.8% (16/90) needed from three to nine types of help they did not receive

Note to interviewer: If the respondent answered “yes” to any of the above questions (#8-#27) but “no one” to the corresponding question about who provided the help (#8a-#27a, respectively), ask question #28A. In other words, if there was any type of help that the respondent needed but did not get from anyone, ask question #28A. Otherwise, skip to question #29.

28A. Can you tell me about that? (*write exactly what respondent says verbatim*)

Criminal justice system advocacy/information	16.7% (15/90)
Service needs assessment/referrals	11.1% (10/90)
Financial assistance	8.9% (8/90)
Creditor assistance	5.6% (5/90)
<i>Other (a variety of responses with no more than 4.4% (4/90) per response):</i> emotional support, support group, professional therapy or counseling, civil case advocacy or information, safety-related services, help with daily living tasks (household chores, shopping, transportation), emergency needs for food or housing, transitional/permanent housing, child-related services, job or school-related services, medical exams or treatment, insurance assistance, alcohol or drug-related services, compensation-related assistance, crisis intervention, more outreach from program, better treatment by program)	35.6% (32/90)

Feedback on VOCA-Funded Assistance Program

Now I'd like to ask some questions specifically about the _____ program, to find out how well their services worked for you. These questions aren't about any of the other sources of help you may have used after the crime, only the _____ program.

(n=594)

29. How helpful was the program in telling you what types of services they offer? Were they... (*read — check only one*)

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| (6) <input type="checkbox"/> very helpful | 80.6% (479/594) |
| (7) <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat helpful | 14.5% (86/594) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> not helpful | 3.5% (21/594) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>not applicable</i> | 0.8% (5/594) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no opinion/don't know</i> | 0.5% (3/594) |

(n=594)

30. How well did the program help you get services you needed that they did not offer? Did they do a... (*read — check only one*)

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> very good job | 54.7% (325/594) |
| (10) <input type="checkbox"/> fairly good job | 19.0% (113/594) |
| (11) <input type="checkbox"/> not a good job | 5.9% (35/594) |

- (8) *not applicable – you didn't need any services they couldn't provide* 17.5% (104/594)
- (9) *no opinion/don't know* 2.9% (17/594)

(n=594)

31. How well did the program seem to understand what you were going through because of the crime?

Were they... (*read — check only one*)

- (12) very understanding 86.2% (512/594)
- (13) somewhat understanding 9.1% (54/594)
- (14) not understanding 3.0% (18/594)
- (8) *not applicable* 0.8% (5/594)
- (9) *no opinion/don't know* 0.8% (5/594)

(n=594)

32. Did the program show concern for you? Did they show... (*read — check only one*)

- (15) a lot of concern 82.3% (489/594)
- (16) some concern 12.6% (75/594)
- (17) little or no concern 4.0% (24/594)
- (8) *not applicable* 0.3% (2/594)
- (9) *no opinion/don't know* 0.7% (4/594)

(n=594)

33. Did the program treat you fairly and respect your rights? Did they... (*read — check only one*)

- (18) treat you very fairly 89.9% (534/594)
- (19) treat you somewhat fairly 7.4% (44/594)
- (20) not treat you fairly 1.2% (7/594)
- (8) *not applicable* 0.7% (4/594)
- (9) *no opinion/don't know* 0.8% (5/594)

(n=594)

34. Did the program try to help you with what you wanted to do about the crime, or did they try to persuade you to do what they thought you should do? Did they... (*read — check only one*)

- (1) mostly try to help you with what you wanted to do 76.9% (457/594)
- (2) mostly try to persuade you to do what they thought you should do 5.6% (33/594)
- (3) neither of the above 12.6% (75/594)
- (8) *not applicable* 3.2% (19/594)
- (9) *no opinion/don't know* 1.7% (10/594)

(n=594)

35. Were the program's services helpful to you? Were they... (*read — check only one*)

- (21) very helpful 78.1% (464/594)
- (22) somewhat helpful 15.5% (92/594)
- (23) not helpful 3.7% (22/594)
- (8) *not applicable* 1.7% (10/594)
- (9) *no opinion/don't know* 1.0% (6/594)

(n=594)

36. If a friend became a victim of the same type of crime, would you suggest they get help from the program? (*check only one*)

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>yes</i> | 94.6% (562/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>maybe, depending on circumstances</i> | 3.4% (20/594) |
| (3) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no</i> | 1.3% (8/594) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no opinion/don't know</i> | 0.7% (4/594) |

(n=594)

37. Has the program ever charged you for any of its services?

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| (24) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>yes</i> | 4.0% (24/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no</i> | 95.8% (569/594) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>don't know</i> | 0.2% (1/594) |

(n=594)

38. Do you think the program's services could be improved in any way?

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>yes (proceed to #38A)</i> | 30.8% (183/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no (skip to #39)</i> | 60.3% (358/594) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>don't know (skip to #39)</i> | 8.9% (53/594) |

38A. How could the services be improved? (*write exactly what respondent says verbatim*)

Improve information: more publicity for program, better information on program services, better needs assessments/service referrals 19.1% (35/183)

Improve infrastructure: more staff, more volunteers, less turnover, more staff training, more funding and other resources 14.2% (26/183)

Improve client contact: more crisis intervention, outreach, personal contact, follow-up contact 13.1% (24/183)

Improve professionalism: show more understanding, don't exclude from services unfairly, raise staff competence levels, don't violate confidentiality 8.7% (16/183)

Improve CJS advocacy/information 8.2% (15/183)

Improve counseling services: offer more, different, or better therapy 6.0% (11/183)

Take a more comprehensive service approach: expand victim eligibility criteria, expand into civil legal services, offender treatment, self-defense 6.0% (11/183)

Other: a variety of comments, with no more than 3.3% (6/183) responses per comment; examples include: deliver services more quickly, compensation-related changes, respect victims' wishes, more assistance with housing needs, prevention and activism, 24.6% (45/183)

provide locally-based services, expand hours of service, obtain harsher punishments for offenders, provide translation/interpretation services, provide employment-related assistance, provide childcare

Interactions with the Justice System

Now I'd like to ask some questions specifically about the interactions you may have had with the justice system, to find out how this went for you.

Note to interviewer: If the service program is law enforcement-based, check "yes" for question #39 without asking it.

(n=594)

39. Did the police, sheriff, or other law enforcement agency take a report for the crime for which the program helped you?

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> yes | 83.5% (496/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> no (skip to #41) | 14.0% (83/594) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> don't know (skip to #41) | 2.5% (15/594) |

(n=496)

40. How satisfied were you with the way the police or other law enforcement officers handled the case?

Were you... ***(read — check only one)***

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| (25) <input type="checkbox"/> very satisfied | 53.2% (264/496) |
| (26) <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat satisfied | 25.8% (128/496) |
| (27) <input type="checkbox"/> not satisfied | 19.6% (97/496) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> no opinion/don't know | 1.4% (7/496) |

(n=594)

41. Did the prosecutor's/solicitor's office ever have a case on the crime?

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| (28) <input type="checkbox"/> yes | 59.8% (355/594) |
| (29) <input type="checkbox"/> no (skip to #48) | 31.5% (187/594) |
| (7) <input type="checkbox"/> skipped (skip to #48) | 0.2% (1/594) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> don't know (skip to #48) | 8.6% (51/594) |

(n=355)

42. How satisfied were you with the way the prosecutor/solicitor handled the criminal court case? Were you ... ***(read — check only one)***

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| (30) <input type="checkbox"/> very satisfied | 53.0% (188/355) |
| (31) <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat satisfied | 22.5% (80/355) |
| (32) <input type="checkbox"/> not satisfied | 17.5% (62/355) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> not applicable | 0.3% (1/355) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> no opinion/don't know | 6.8% (24/355) |

(n=355)

43. How satisfied were you with the way the judge or magistrate handled the criminal court case? Were you... (*read — check only one*)

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> very satisfied | 44.8% (159/355) |
| (10) <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat satisfied | 22.0% (78/355) |
| (11) <input type="checkbox"/> not satisfied | 16.3% (58/355) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>not applicable</i> | 8.7% (31/355) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no opinion/don't know</i> | 8.2% (29/355) |

(n=355)

44. How satisfied were you with your role in the criminal court case? By this, I mean things like telling your side of the story, providing evidence, getting information on what was going on with the court case, and getting the chance to give your opinion on what should be done in the case. Were you . . . (*read — check only one*)

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| (12) <input type="checkbox"/> very satisfied | 48.7% (173/355) |
| (13) <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat satisfied | 19.4% (69/355) |
| (14) <input type="checkbox"/> not satisfied | 17.5% (62/355) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>not applicable</i> | 7.9% (28/355) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no opinion/don't know</i> | 6.5% (23/355) |

(n=355)

45. Do you know if the offender was convicted (found guilty or pled guilty)?

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| (15) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>yes</i> | 77.7% (276/355) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no (skip to #48)</i> | 18.0% (64/355) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>not applicable (skip to #48)</i> | 0.3% (1/355) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>don't know (skip to #48)</i> | 3.9% (14/355) |

(n=276)

46. Do you know what the sentence was?

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| (16) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>yes</i> | 85.9% (237/276) |
| (17) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no</i> | 8.0% (22/276) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>not applicable — not convicted</i> | 6.2% (17/276) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>don't know</i> | 0.0% (0/276) |

(n=276)

47. How satisfied were you with the outcome of the case (by outcome I mean conviction and sentencing)? Were you . . . (*read — check only one*)

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| (18) <input type="checkbox"/> very satisfied (<i>skip to #48</i>) | 44.6% (123/276) |
| (19) <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat satisfied (<i>proceed to #47A</i>) | 23.9% (66/276) |
| (20) <input type="checkbox"/> not satisfied (<i>proceed to #47A</i>) | 26.4% (73/276) |
| (7) <input type="checkbox"/> Skipped by the Interviewer (but should have been asked) | 0.4% (1/276) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>no opinion/don't know (skip to #48)</i> | 4.7% (13/276) |

47A. What weren't you satisfied about? (*write exactly what respondent says verbatim*)

Wanted more severe punishment for the offender	48.5% (66/136)
One or more offenders got off unfairly (case dropped or acquitted)	8.1% (11/136)
Charges should have been stronger or different	5.1% (7/136)
Status, rights, needs, or input as the victim were ignored	9.6% (13/136)
<i>Other comments (each example had no more than 3.7% (5/136):</i>	28.7% (39/136)

Offender-related: wanted restitution, wanted therapy or program for the offender, offender got a protection order against the victim, offender should have to admit guilt, parents should be held responsible for their children's crimes

System-related: system failed to protect victim from contact with offender, system didn't enforce conditions of plea agreement or probation, offender should not have been released from prison on furlough, cultural misunderstandings with police or prosecutors, police or prosecutor mishandled the case, justice system interventions didn't address victim's needs, case processing was too slow, unrecovered financial losses

Victim's Compensation

Now I'd like to ask some questions specifically about crime related expenses.

(n=594)

48. Did you have any expenses or financial costs as a result of the crime (whether you paid for them yourself or not)?

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> yes (proceed to #48A) | 65.5% (389/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> no (skip to #50) | 34.2% (203/594) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> don't know (skip to #50) | 0.3% (2/594) |

(n=389)

48A. Did you have expenses or loss of finances for: (read)	Yes	No	Don't Know
Medical/dental treatment, rehabilitation, prescriptions, or devices (e.g., wheelchairs, hearing aids, glasses, canes, walkers, etc.)	44.5% 173/389	55.5% 216/389	0% 0/389
Counseling	37.3% 145/389	62.7% 244/389	0% 0/389
Lost wages	42.7% 166/389	57.3% 223/389	0% 0/389
Funeral or burial costs	17.2% 67/389	82.8% 322/389	0% 0/389
Lost income from someone who was killed	5.7% 22/389	94.3% 367/389	0% 0/389
Crime scene clean up	9.5% 37/389	90.2% 351/389	0.3% 1/389
Repairing or replacing property (including locks, windows, doors, etc.)	37.3% 145/389	62.5% 243/389	0.3% 1/389
Stolen cash or checks or other valuables that were stolen	24.7% 96/389	74.6% 290/389	0.8% 3/389
Moving or moving related costs (such as rent, security deposit, etc.)	23.7% 92/389	76.1% 296/389	0.3% 1/389
Transportation costs (to go to court, medical treatment, counseling, therapy, etc.)	45.0% 175/389	55.0% 214/389	0% 0/389
Someone to provide services you needed (e.g., housekeeping, childcare, assistance with shopping, etc.)	18.0% 70/389	81.7% 318/389	0.3% 1/389
Attorney's fees to help with compensation application	10.8% 42/389	88.9% 346/389	0.3% 1/389
Other attorney's fees	22.4% 87/389	77.4% 301/389	0.3% 1/389
Insurance deductible	19.5% 76/389	79.2% 308/389	1.3% 5/389
CJS fees, fines, restitution, services, referral programs	2.6% 10/389		

Divorce and other civil case costs	1.5% 6/389		
<i>Other: no more than 1% (4/389) of responses per example: Phone calls, mail services; safety/prevention devices, services; offender's unpaid bills; tuition for special school, efforts to apprehend offender (wanted posters, private investigator)</i>	3.9% 15/389		

(n=389)

49. How much did these crime-related expenses cost you altogether, from your own pocket (not reimbursed by insurance, restitution, compensation, or other sources)? Your best guess, or a range, would be fine. **Note to interviewer: if an exact amount is given record it in both blanks.**
(Note: the values given here are the average of all the reported ranges given)

\$ 0.00 to \$ 700,000.00

4.4% (17/389) respondents did not provide this information

Of the 372 respondents who did provide this information:
8.9% (33/372) said they had no out-of-pocket expenses
Mean out-of-pocket expenses = \$9,890
Median out-of-pocket expenses = \$1,200

Of the 339 respondents who reported some out-of-pocket expenses:
Mean out-of-pocket expenses = \$10,852
Median out-of-pocket expenses = \$800
Range of out-of-pocket expenses = \$10 - \$700,000

(n=594)

50. Have you ever heard of the crime victim's compensation program (before this survey)?

- (1) **yes** 44.5% (248/594)
- (2) **no (skip to Brief Description of the Crime)** 53.9% (332/594)
- (3) **respondent not familiar with comp but program had applied** 0.5% (3/594)
- (9) **don't know (skip to Brief Description of the Crime)** 1.6% (11/594)

Note to interviewer: If respondents express an interest in getting information about compensation, tell them it's a state program for reimbursing some crime victims for some of their crime-related expenses, and refer them to the following phone numbers in their states:

CA: 1-800-777-9229
ID: 1-800-950-2110
PA: 1-800-233-2339
SC: 1-800-220-5370 (within SC) or (803) 734-1900 (if in 803 area code or outside SC)
VT: 1-800-750-1213 (within VT)
WI: 1-800-446-6564

(n=248)

51. We'd like to know how you found out about the compensation program, did staff or information from any of the following sources make you aware of the program? (*read — check all that apply*)

- A. law enforcement (police, sheriff, staff of a law enforcement agency) 8.1% (20/248)
- B. prosecutor/solicitor's office 9.3% (23/248)
- C. court system (judge, clerk, other court staff) 4.8% (12/248)
- D. corrections (jail, prison, probation, or parole personnel or other corrections staff) 1.2% (3/248)
- E. the _____ program 53.6% (133/248)
- F. victim service program, hotline, or religious organization other than _____ staff (also includes counseling groups and social service agencies) 8.9% (22/248)
- G. health care provider or funeral home (hospital, doctor's office, medical clinic staff) 2.4% (6/248)
- H. advertisements (compensation program's ads, posters, billboards, brochures, public service announcements, phone book listing, or Internet web page) 9.7% (24/248)
- I. the compensation program contacted you directly (with a visit, letter, or phone call) 8.1% (20/248)
- J. family, friend, coworker, schoolmate, or neighbor 6.0% (15/248)
- K. other, please specify: _____ 3.2% (8/248)
- L. *don't know* 0.4% (1/248)
- 13.7% (34/248) had more than one information source

(n=248)

52. Did you know about the compensation program before the crime was committed?

- (1) *yes (skip to #53)* 25.8% (64/248)
- (2) *no (proceed to #52A)* 74.2% (184/248)

(n=184)

52 A. When did you first find out about the compensation program? Was it... (*read— check only one*)

- (1) the same day or night the crime was committed 5.4% (10/184)
- (2) less than 1 week after the crime 22.8% (42/184)
- (3) between 1 week and 1 month 36.4% (67/184)
- (4) more than 1 month up to 6 months 17.4% (32/184)
- (5) between 6 to 12 months 4.9% (9/184)
- (6) more than 1 year after the crime 9.8% (18/184)
- (7) Skipped by the Interviewer (but should have been asked) 0.5% (1/184)
- (9) *don't know* 2.7% (5/184)

(n=248)

53. Did you need help with victims' compensation?

- (1) *yes (proceed to #53A)* 28.6% (72/248)
- (2) *no (skip to #54)* 79.0% (171/248)
- (9) *don't know (skip to #54)* 2.4% (6/248)

(n=71)

53A. Who helped you with this? (*prompt – check all that apply*)

- A. no one 9.9% (7/71)
- B. the _____ program 73.2% (52/71)
- C. another victim service, hotline or religious organization (social service, counseling) 5.6% (4/71)
- D. health care provider (doctor, nurse, clinic, hospital) 1.4% (1/71)
- E. criminal justice system (police, sheriff, prosecutor/solicitor, court, jail, prison, probation, or parole) 5.6% (4/71)
- F. family, friends or other personal acquaintances (neighbors, coworkers, schoolmates) 4.2% (3/71)
- G. employee assistance 0.0% (0/71)
- H. other, please specify: _____ 4.2% (3/71)
- I. *don't know/refused* 0.0% (0/71)

4.2% (3/71) had more than one help source

(n=248)

54. Did you apply for victim compensation?

- (1) *yes (skip to Brief Description of Crime)* 40.7% (101/248)
- (2) *no (proceed to #55)* 54.8% (136/248)
- (9) *don't know (skip to Brief Description of Crime)* 4.4% (11/248)

(n=136)

55. Why did you decide not to apply for compensation? (*prompt — check all that apply*)

- A. you had no crime-related expenses 33.8% (46/136)
- B. your expenses weren't enough to make it worthwhile 4.4% (6/136)
- C. your insurance or other sources paid all your expenses 8.1% (11/136)
- D. the types of expenses you had aren't covered by compensation 7.4% (10/136)
- E. you thought your income was too high to qualify for compensation 2.2% (3/136)
- F. the type of crime isn't covered by compensation 1.5% (2/136)
- G. you didn't want to report the crime to the police or be involved in prosecution 1.5% (2/136)
- H. you didn't want to make an insurance claim for your crime-related expenses 0.7% (1/136)
- I. you missed the filing deadline 4.4% (6/136)
- J. you couldn't get the required paperwork together (police reports, bills or other proof of expenses, insurance statements, etc.) 2.2% (3/136)
- K. the application process seemed like more trouble than it was worth 4.4% (6/136)
- L. you needed help with the application forms or process and couldn't get it 4.4% (6/136)
- M. compensation forms or information weren't available in your language 0.0% (0/136)

- N. the _____ program told you that you probably wouldn't qualify 0.0% (0/136)
- O. someone told you not to bother with it because it wasn't worthwhile 1.5% (2/136)
- P. *other:*
- Answer indicates client confused comp with restitution or misunderstood comp regulations 5.9% (8/36)
 - Comp not a priority for client, reasons unclear 8.8% (12/136)
 - Client thought he/she wouldn't be qualified for comp, reasons unclear 0.7% (1/136)
 - client didn't want anyone to know 1.5% (2/136)
 - Client still plans to apply 2.9% (4/136)
 - Client feels expenses shouldn't be the state's responsibility, or client wanted to bear crime-related expenses 2.2% (3/136)
 - don't know* 8.1% (11/136)
- 5.9% (8/136) had more than one reason

Brief Description of the Crime

I'd like to ask a few very brief questions about the crime that the _____ program helped you with. I won't ask for any details, just a few questions to make sure we know what kinds of crimes the program addresses.

Note to interviewer: don't ask #56 if we already have the information from the program (from the sampling log or other database).

(n=594)

56. What type of crime did the program help you with? (*check all that apply*)
- A. **child physical and/or sexual abuse** 8.9% (53/594)
 - B. **domestic or family abuse, including stalking** 36.2% (215/594)
 - C. **adult sexual assault as an adult** 7.1% (42/594)
 - D. **adult survivor of child physical or sexual abuse** 3.2% (19/594)
 - E. **drunk driving (DUI, DWI, BUI), other traffic-related** 7.4% (44/594)
 - F. **homicide (*skip to #57A*)** 12.1% (72/594)
 - G. **physical assault (non-domestic)** 8.6% (51/594)
 - H. **robbery, burglary, property damage, theft** 15.0% (89/594)
 - I. **financial exploitation (e.g., fraud)** 3.2% (19/594)
 - J. ***other:***
 - injury, assault, dog attack, arson** 2.7% (26/594)
 - trespass, threats, harassment, hate crime** 1.5% (9/594)
 - disturbing the peace, disorderly conduct, lewd act** 0.5% (3/594)
 - elder abuse** 0.3% (2/594)
 - weapon violation** 0.2% (1/594)
- 4.2% (25/594) reported more than one type of crime

(n=401)

62. How did you (or the victim/your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) know the person who committed the crime? (*check all that apply*)

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| (A) <input type="checkbox"/> husband or wife | 28.4% (114/401) |
| (B) <input type="checkbox"/> ex-husband or ex-wife | 4.0% (16/401) |
| (C) <input type="checkbox"/> boyfriend, girlfriend, fiancée, or partner | 16.0% (64/401) |
| (D) <input type="checkbox"/> ex-boyfriend, ex-girlfriend, ex-fiancée, or ex-partner | 4.0% (16/401) |
| (E) <input type="checkbox"/> parent, child, or sibling | 7.0% (28/401) |
| (F) <input type="checkbox"/> extended family member (e.g., aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, cousin, etc.) | 5.5% (22/401) |
| (G) <input type="checkbox"/> friend, roommate, babysitter, home health aid | 9.0% (36/401) |
| (H) <input type="checkbox"/> neighbor, schoolmate, student, teacher, co-worker, boss, employee, landlord, tenant | 12.5% (50/401) |
| (I) <input type="checkbox"/> acquaintance, familiar stranger | 16.0% (64/401) |
| (J) <input type="checkbox"/> other: a connection of client's family member or (ex) partner (e.g., ex-wife's boyfriend or new husband; son's or daughter's friend, boyfriend, girlfriend, fiancé, or (ex) spouse; daughter's stepfather, boyfriend's wife or ex-girlfriend; husband's girlfriend; mother's boyfriend, etc.) | 4.2% (17/401) |
| (K) <input type="checkbox"/> don't know | 0.5% (2/401) |

3.7% (15/401) listed multiple types of offenders; these were most often non-related friends, associates, and acquaintances

Demographic Information

Finally, just a few questions for statistical purposes.

(n=594)

63. What is your sex?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> male | 17.8% (106/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> female | 82.2% (488/594) |

(n=594)

64. What is your race? (*check only one*)

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> White (non-Hispanic) | 69.9% (415/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino(a) | 10.1% (60/594) |
| (3) <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African-American | 15.8% (94/594) |
| (4) <input type="checkbox"/> Native American | 1.0% (6/594) |
| (5) <input type="checkbox"/> Asian, South Asian, or Pacific Islander | 1.9% (11/594) |
| (6) <input type="checkbox"/> other: (Please specify) _____ | 0.8% (5/594) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> refused | 0.5% (3/594) |

(n=594)

65. What age group do you fall in? (*read — check only one*)

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> 18-25 | 12.0% (71/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> 26-39 | 35.9% (213/594) |
| (3) <input type="checkbox"/> 40-59 | 40.6% (241/594) |
| (4) <input type="checkbox"/> 60+ | 11.4% (68/594) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> don't know | 0.2% (1/594) |

(n=594)

66. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (*check only one*)

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> some high school or less | 15.2% (90/594) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> completed high school or received GED | 29.6% (176/594) |
| (3) <input type="checkbox"/> post high school business, or trade school | 5.4% (32/594) |
| (4) <input type="checkbox"/> some college | 26.4% (157/594) |
| (5) <input type="checkbox"/> completed college (received college degree) | 17.2% (102/594) |
| (6) <input type="checkbox"/> post graduate education | 5.7% (34/594) |
| (7) <input type="checkbox"/> Skipped by the Interviewer (but should have been asked) | 0.2% (1/594) |
| (9) <input type="checkbox"/> don't know | 0.3% (2/594) |

Note to interviewer: ask the following questions about the victim's demographics only if the assistance program client was not the direct or primary victim of the crime (#57 is no or it's a homicide, #56F is checked). If the respondent is the primary client, then skip to the closing.

(n=162)

67. What is the victim's sex?

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Male</i> | 54.3% (88/162) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Female</i> | 44.4% (72/162) |
| (3) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Skipped</i> | 0.6% (1/162) |
| (4) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not Applicable</i> | 0.6% (1/162) |

(n=162)

68. What is the victim's (your daughter/your son/her/his/etc.) race? (*check only one*)

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>White (non-Hispanic)</i> | 55.6% (90/162) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Hispanic or Latino(a)</i> | 12.3% (20/162) |
| (3) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Black or African-American</i> | 25.9% (42/162) |
| (4) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Native American</i> | 0.0% (0/162) |
| (5) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Asian, South Asian, or Pacific Islander</i> | 3.7% (6/162) |
| (6) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>other: (Please specify) _____</i> | 1.2% (2/162) |
| (7) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Skipped</i> | 0.6% (1/162) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Not Applicable</i> | 0.6% (1/162) |

(n=162)

69. What age group did the victim (your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) fall in at the time of the crime?
(*read — check only one*)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> under 18 | 40.7% (66/162) |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> 18-25 | 26.5% (43/162) |

- (3) 26-39 16.0% (26/162)
- (4) 40-59 10.5% (17/162)
- (5) 60+ 3.7% (6/162)
- (7) *skipped by interviewer (but should have been asked)* 1.9% (3/162)
- (8) *Not Applicable* 0.6% (1/162)

(n=162)

70. What is the highest level of education the victim (your daughter/your son/she/he/etc.) completed?

prompt — check only one

- (1) some high school or less 50.6% (82/162)
- (2) completed high school or received GED 21.6% (35/162)
- (3) post high school business, or trade school 3.7% (6/162)
- (4) some college 13.0% (21/162)
- (5) completed college (received college degree) 4.3% (7/162)
- (6) post graduate education 1.9% (3/162)
- (7) *skipped by interviewer (but should have been asked)* 3.1% (5/162)
- (8) *Not Applicable* 0.6% (1/162)
- (9) *refused/don't know* 1.2% (2/162)

*Thank you very much for your participation in this survey. Let me get an address for you and we'll send you the \$10 check. **Note to interviewer: record information on next page.** Should I put your name on the envelope or another name? You should receive the check within the next month, at the most.*

Time interview ended: _____

VOCA Evaluation

SURVEY RESPONDENT PAYMENT FORM (\$10 per form)

Respondent's Name: _____

Respondent's Address: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Signature of Interviewer: _____

Check Number: _____

Appendix I

VOCA Assistance Client Survey Methods

The goal of survey sampling procedures was to obtain a cross-section of clients served by the VOCA-funded direct service programs we met with in our second round of site visits. Two sampling criteria were specified. We only interviewed clients aged 18 and over, because of ethical concerns and requirements when interviewing minors. Our other sampling criterion was that clients should not have had any very recent contact with the program (within the last three months or so), but should have been served within the last twelve months or so.¹⁵⁰ This criterion attempted to avoid clients who were currently actively receiving services (and thus had not come to some sort of closure with the program), while also excluding clients who had been served so long ago that their memories of program services may be incomplete. No other sampling criteria were to be used in selecting cases.

The sample of VOCA-funded assistance program clients included in the survey should be viewed as a convenience sample, not as a nationally representative sample. This means that one should not make unqualified generalizations from the results of this survey to VOCA-funded program clients across the nation. Several limitations make this cautious approach a wise course.

Sampling Methods

To begin with, the survey sample was drawn from clients of 17 programs. These programs are located in six states across the nation, and were selected to provide diversity on program administration (public-based vs. private non-profits), types of crime victims served, and client population demographics. However, these programs were not selected in any systematic way to guarantee representativeness of the thousands of VOCA-funded victim service programs across the nation.

Another limitation arises from uncertainty about sample selection methods applied, because of incomplete data on the sampling procedures. Victim service program staff conducted the actual sample selection procedures, including reviewing client records to identify clients, applying eligibility criteria, and making the selection decision. This was necessary because of both logistic and client confidentiality concerns. It is program staff who are most familiar with program records and record-keeping systems, and have readiest access to them. In addition, many programs did not feel comfortable releasing clients' names and contact information to researchers without prior consent from the client. Research staff provided sampling materials to program staff and worked closely with them (including weekly phone calls) to establish sampling procedures, monitor progress, and troubleshoot as necessary.

The program staff were assured that findings from survey data would not be reported in such a way as to identify clients of their program as such. In addition, sample selection criteria and representative sample selection methods were promoted, and tools for effective sampling were provided. See Attachment 1 for the overview of the survey and sampling procedures provided to program staff. Attachment 2 presents the sampling log program staff were asked to use when reviewing client records. Most of the programs chose to contact clients for their consent prior to releasing their information to

¹⁵⁰ However, some programs' caseloads during this timeframe were not large enough to yield eligible clients in sufficient numbers to meet our target sample sizes, so we had to expand the timeframe for these programs. In addition, some programs' databases were not completely up-to-date, so it was more feasible to sample from a somewhat less recent time period.

SANDAG for the survey contact; attachments 3 and 4 were provided to these programs. Attachment 3 is the contact log for use in recording consent contact attempts and outcomes, and Attachment 4 is the script to be followed when speaking with clients about this survey.

Despite the guidance and assistance provided by research staff to program staff during the sampling process, it is not possible to determine the extent to which the sampling goals were achieved because of insufficient data received. Program staff were asked to make records of all client cases involved at each step of the sampling procedures, and to provide all records to SANDAG (with client identifiers deleted as appropriate). However, it seems very unlikely that these goals were achieved in full. Several programs that made consent contacts with clients prior to releasing their names to SANDAG inadvertently destroyed all records on clients not selected for the survey contact. Other programs provided records on only a very few clients who were not selected for the survey contact, indicating incomplete documentation of the record review process. In all, SANDAG received records from the 17 programs on 1635 clients, of whom 1121 were selected by the service programs for the survey contact. It seems very unlikely, given that most programs did undertake the consent contact with clients prior to authorizing the survey contact, that nearly 70% of all client records reviewed were found to be eligible, reached by the program, and gave consent to the survey contact.

Table 22 provides summary data on the 17 participating programs, the client information received from these programs, and the outcomes of SANDAG's survey efforts.

Table 22: Summary Data on Sampling and Survey Procedures

Program	Type of program	Victims served	Sampling time frame (Survey fielding time frame)	Consent contacts by program	N cases selected by program for survey	N cases reached for survey (percent of those selected)	N cases surveyed (percent of those reached)
<i>California</i>							
Community Service Programs, Inc.	Private non-profit	All crimes, special programs for gang violence and hate crimes	3/00-11/00 (5/01-9/01)	By phone	91	66 (73%)	60 (91%)
Su Casa Family Crisis and Support Center	Private non-profit	Domestic violence and sexual assault	7/00-3/01 (5/01-9/01)	By phone	46	38 (83%)	38 (100%)
<i>Idaho</i>							
Kootenai Co. Victim Impact Project	Court-based	Property crime by juveniles	4/00-1/01 (4/01-7/01)	None	61	47 (77%)	35 (74%)
Women's & Children's Alliance	Private non-profit	Domestic violence and sexual assault	4/00-5/01 (4/01-8/01)	By phone with follow-up letter	52	43 (83%)	37 (86%)
Sane Solutions	Private non-profit	Child abuse, including adult survivors	1/99-6/01 (5/01-9/01)	By phone	16	14 (88%)	12 (86%)

Program	Type of program	Victims served	Sampling time frame (Survey fielding time frame)	Consent contacts by program	N cases selected by program for survey	N cases reached for survey (percent of those selected)	N cases surveyed (percent of those reached)
<i>Pennsylvania</i>							
Families of Murder Victims/Anti-Violence Partnership	Private non-profit	Homicide survivors	3/00-1/01 (6/01-8/01)	By phone	59	46 (78%)	44 (96%)
Crime Victims' Center of Chester County	Private non-profit	All crimes	2/79-8/00 (5/01-8/01)	By phone	65	43 (66%)	38 (88%)
Senior Victim Services	Private non-profit	Crimes against seniors	8/00-5/01 (7/01-10/01)	By phone	59	46 (78%)	42 (91%)
<i>South Carolina</i>							
Rape Crisis Council of Pickens County	Private non-profit	Sexual assault	8/99-12/00 (3/01-10/01)	By phone	53	34 (64%)	33 (97%)
MADD of South Carolina	Private non-profit	Drunk driving crashes	2/00-5/01 (3/01-8/01)	None	67	44 (66%)	37 (84%)
Newberry County Sheriff's Office	Law enforcement	All crimes	10/99-3/01 (3/01-9/01)	None	128	55 (43%)	34 (62%)

Program	Type of program	Victims served	Sampling time frame (Survey fielding time frame)	Consent contacts by program	N cases selected by program for survey	N cases reached for survey (percent of those selected)	N cases surveyed (percent of those reached)
<i>Vermont</i>							
St. Albans Abuse & Rape Crisis Center	Private non-profit	Domestic violence and sexual assault	3/00-2/01 (3/01-8/01)	By phone	74	48 (65%)	36 (75%)
Women Helping Battered Women	Private non-profit	Domestic violence	?-10/00 (3/01-5/01)	By phone	57	37 (65%)	32 (86%)
Windsor County State's Attorney's Office	Prosecutor	All crimes	1/00-6/01 (3/01-8/01)	None	125	71 (57%)	46 (65%)
<i>Wisconsin</i>							
Pathways of Courage	Private non-profit	Domestic violence and sexual assault	1/00-12/00 (5/01-7/01)	By phone	46	38 (83%)	36 (95%)
Racine County Victim/Witness Program	Prosecutor	All crimes	10/00-6/01 (4/01-9/01)	None	119	69 (58%)	33 (48%)
Counseling of Milwaukee, Hand-to-Hand Program	Private non-profit	Child abuse	dates are missing (6/01-8/01)	By phone with follow-up letter	3	1 (33%)	1 (100%)
<i>Total Ns</i>					1121	740	594
<i>Average response rates</i>						66% of those selected for contact	80% of those reached for the survey

Survey Methods

We attempted to contact all clients selected by programs for survey contacts. Interviewers called every day of the week between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Interviewers made up to eight to ten attempts to reach clients. When someone other than the client answered the phone, we asked for a time to call back to speak with the client, or for the client's new phone number when we were told he or she was no longer at the given number. We did not discuss any aspects of the survey with anyone other than the identified client, and we did not leave messages with people or on voice mail. Our identification registered as "San Diego Association of Governments" on caller ID boxes.

Average response rates are quite good for a survey of crime victims: two-thirds of those selected for the survey contact were reached, and 80 percent of those reached for the survey participated in it. However, these rates vary a good deal across programs. The general trend is that clients of programs who did not make consent contacts in advance of the survey contact were more difficult to reach by phone; we only reached 60 percent of these clients on average. This is not surprising, since these clients' phone numbers had not just been verified through the program's consent contact. In addition, clients who did not consent in advance of the survey contact were less likely to participate in the survey, at an average of 67 percent. These clients only had one opportunity to decline, whereas the clients who were contacted in advance had two opportunities (at the consent contact by the program then at the survey contact by SANDAG), so it is not surprising that more of them chose to decline at the survey contact.

While we cannot perform reliable statistical analyses on program sampling procedures (due to missing data), we can analyze differences between the clients who participated in the survey and those who were selected for the survey contact but did not participate. These analyses are limited to the data available for both subsets of cases:

- the state in which the program was located
- the program
- the administrative type of program (public-based vs. private nonprofit)
- whether the program conducted consent contacts with clients
- the type of crime
- the relationship between the victim and the client
- victims' age, race, and sex.

These data were available for 1065 of the 1121 cases selected for the survey contact (95%). As shown in Table 23, these analyses indicate that some types of clients were more likely to participate in the surveys than others, which is another limitation on the representativeness of the survey sample.

Table 23: Differences Between Clients Who Participated in the Survey and Those Who Did Not Participate

Research Question	Finding	Statistics
<i>Were we more or less likely to complete surveys with clients of programs that did consent contacts prior to releasing clients' information for the survey contact?</i>	Surveys were more likely to be completed with clients who had been contacted by programs in advance of the survey contact.	$X^2 (1) = 97.2, p < .001$
<i>Were we more or less likely to complete surveys with clients of some types of programs but not others?</i>	Surveys were more likely to be completed with clients of the private non-profits, and less likely to be completed with clients of the public-based programs.	$X^2 (1) = 108.9, p < .001$
<i>Were we more or less likely to complete surveys in some states versus others?</i>	We were more likely to complete surveys in California, Idaho, and Pennsylvania, and less likely to complete them in South Carolina, Vermont, and Wisconsin.	$X^2 (5) = 55.0, p < .001$
<i>Were we more or less likely to complete surveys with victims of some types of crime vs. other types?</i>	We were more likely to complete surveys with victims (or co-victims) of child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, adult survivors of child abuse, and homicide. We were less likely to complete surveys with victims of robbery/burglary and "other" crimes. There was no difference in cases of drunk driving crashes, non-domestic assault, and financial exploitation.	$X^2 (9) = 49.1, p < .001$
<i>Were we more or less likely to complete surveys with program clients who were the direct victim of the crime, vs. those who were not the direct victim (co-victims)?</i>	We were more likely to complete the survey when the victim and the program client are not the same person.	$X^2 (1) = 9.9, p < .002$
<i>Were we more or less likely to complete surveys based on victims' demographic characteristics?</i>	We were more likely to complete surveys with minority clients than with white clients, and with women than with men. There was no difference by age of victim.	$X^2 (1) = 5.1, p < .03$ for white vs. minority $X^2 (1) = 9.1, p < .003$ for sex of victim

In summary, given the information provided on the clients who were selected for the survey contact, we were more likely to actually conduct surveys with:

- *Clients who had previously given program staff permission to release their information to us.* This is almost certainly due to the fact that the phone numbers for these clients were fresh and accurate (the programs had very recently phoned them to obtain consent), since the major obstacle to conducting surveys was reaching clients by phone. Given that the use of the consent contact procedure was almost entirely confounded with administrative type of program (all but one of the private non-profits did this but none of the public-based programs did), it is very likely the consent contact variable that actually explains differences in survey completion across public vs. nonprofit programs. Similarly, programs in those states in which we were more likely to complete surveys were more likely to make the consent contacts, and vice versa. Therefore, the cross-state differences in survey completion are probably also due to a confound between state and use of the consent contact procedure.
- *Victims or co-victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and homicide.* We were less likely to complete surveys with victims of robbery/burglary, and miscellaneous types of crimes. We were equally likely to complete as not complete surveys with victims of drunk driving crashes, non-domestic assault, and financial exploitation. Again, this seems likely to be due to differential use of the consent contact procedure by the program, since programs that supplied domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and homicide victims or co-victims all used this procedure, whereas programs that supplied many of the victims of robbery/burglary and miscellaneous types of crime did not make consent contacts with clients.
- *Clients who were not the direct victim of the crime.* Although most of the clients we surveyed were the direct victim of the crime (73 percent), we were disproportionately more likely to complete surveys with clients who were not the primary victims.
- *Victims who were members of minority groups and female victims.* There was no difference in survey completion rates by age of victim. While most of our survey participants were White (70 percent), we were disproportionately more likely to complete surveys when the victims were Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, or other races/ethnic groups. Most of our survey participants were women (82 percent), and we were more likely to complete surveys with women than with men.

Summary of Limits on Sample Representativeness

The survey sample should be considered a convenience sample rather than a nationally representative sample because of the following characteristics of the sampling and survey methods:

- VOCA-funded programs from which clients were sampled were not selected in such a way as to assure representativeness of programs across the nation, although they were selected to obtain diversity on a number of factors, including type of administrative location (private non-profits vs. public-based), types of crimes addressed, and population demographics.
- Data provided by programs on their sampling methods were not sufficiently complete to allow us to validate the application of the specified selection criteria.
- Comparisons of sampling data on clients who were selected for the survey but did not actually participate in it, versus those who did participate, found a number of differences between the two groups.

These limitations mean that caution should be used when attempting to generalize from the findings on this sample to clients of VOCA-funded programs across the nation as a whole.

Attachment 1: Overview for Program Staff

As part of our national evaluation of the VOCA compensation and assistance programs funded by the Office for Victims of Crime and the National Institute of Justice in the U.S. Department of Justice, we are conducting phone surveys with about 40 clients of 18 victim service programs in 6 states across the nation. We feel it is critically important that victims' voices are heard in this and any other effort to inform policy and practice through research. This document provides more information about the evaluation and the survey, how it will be done, and how the findings will be used.

This research is being conducted by the Urban Institute, a non-profit "think tank" in Washington, DC that does program evaluation and policy analysis, and the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). SANDAG is responsible for the administration of the victim phone surveys, and has conducted several victim surveys in the past. SANDAG concluded a phone survey of people who have applied for victims' compensation, as part of this research project.

The Purposes of the Evaluation and the Survey

We are studying the administration of VOCA compensation and assistance programs at the federal, state, and local levels in six states. Our goal is to get input from a variety of stakeholders (program administrators, advocates, victims, etc.) at different levels (federal, state, local, and individual) so we can analyze how the different layers interrelate and what improvements should be made. We have conducted in-depth interviews with state administrators, members of advisory bodies, and victim advocacy groups, to identify policy and practice issues in state administration. We are in the process of conducting detailed interviews with assistance providers in 18 communities within our six states, to get their perspectives on state and federal issues, and to learn about assistance program administration at the local level. We have recently completed phone surveys with 452 people who applied for victims' compensation in our six states, to get the clients' perspective on how programs operate. We are planning phone surveys with people who received services from the 18 local programs, to get their input on how programs work and how they could be improved.

We are using this information to identify important policy and practice issues in how VOCA funds are used, and to make recommendations for how guidelines, policies, and practices could be improved to better serve victims. All findings are reported in a confidential way so that neither state, assistance program, nor individual client are identified; our interest is in identifying patterns and trends rather than providing case studies. The survey data will be reported as findings from statistical analyses. Some analyses will be done on the entire dataset, all 600+ surveys across the 18 programs. Other analyses will be done across subsets of the data, such as all prosecution-based or domestic violence programs.

We would be happy to analyze survey data provided by clients of your program and provide you with the results of the analysis, in the hopes that you would find this information useful in program planning, fundraising, and other important activities. We would not release any information that would identify who spoke with us or what individuals said to us. We would only be able to provide the results of the aggregate analyses if we reach enough clients so that the findings would not potentially identify

specific individuals. We would not provide information specifically from your clients to anyone but you.

The Nature of the Survey

We want to talk with victims about their experiences in working with assistance programs, what worked well for them and what improvements could be made. We will not ask victims to discuss the crime they experienced. The survey form is attached.

The survey takes about 15 to 20 minutes and we pay victims \$10 to thank them for their time (even if they don't complete the whole survey). We mail them a check at an address that they provide as a good place to receive it. The check is accompanied by a cover letter that simply says, "Thank you for your assistance in our phone survey."

Selecting the Survey Sample

It is vitally important that we select the clients to survey in a way that provides a fair and balanced sampling of your clients. If we don't get a good cross-section, the results won't be very useful to anyone. **Our only sample selection criterion is that we would like to speak with people who have not been actively involved with your program within the last three months or so, but have had service contact with you within the last 12 months or so.** We want to speak with people who are not currently active clients for two reasons: because some of them may have reached some sort of closure on services and will have more to tell us than people who are still in the process of working with your program, and because we don't want there to be any confusion that survey participation will have any impact on ongoing services. We want to speak with people you have seen within a fairly recent time period (within the last year or so) in the hopes that their memories will still be fresh.

If we used any other selection criteria, such as the types of services or number of contacts with your program, the outcome of the client's court case or other crime-related crisis, or the client's current situation, we would not have a fair and representative sample of the clients you serve. Surveys with just certain types of clients would be of very limited use to us, to you, and to OVC, NIJ, policymakers, and other state and local program administrators across the nation.

A sampling log that you can use to document your sampling procedures and provide information on clients selected into the sample attached. We are providing multiple copies of this form on paper so you don't spend your time in front of a copy machine. Or, if you prefer, you can provide us with a printout from your automated database that includes information in these factors (victim's/ client's name, phone number, information on other people to contact for help locating the client, victim's/ client's demographics, type of crime, and sample selection decision (yes/no, and if no why not).

We understand and share your concern for protecting clients' safety, privacy, and confidentiality. Two of the principals in this evaluation are Barbara Smith and Lisa Newmark. Barbara has conducted a

number of victim surveys to study the effects of protection orders, no-drop policies, specialized courts, and various types of victim services. Her work has focused primarily on victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Lisa has also done a good deal of research on victims' issues, and has 10 years' experience working in shelters and on hotlines for domestic violence and sexual assault victims. Barbara, Lisa, and the SANDAG staff recognize that phone surveys could potentially pose a threat to victims' safety or privacy unless a series of precautionary steps are taken.

Based on our experiences and concerns, SANDAG uses a number of precautions to make sure all victim surveys are conducted in a safe manner that respects victims' needs and rights. The following describes our procedures.

Recruiting and Training Interviewers

Several SANDAG interviewers have gained a great deal of experience in conducting victim phone surveys for the recently-completed survey of compensation claimants, and we plan to employ them in the survey of assistance recipients. All the interviewers employed to date have been women, and we employ both English speakers and Spanish speakers.

Before making any phone calls, SANDAG interviewers are trained in recognizing and responding to safety issues and signs of victim distress. The following is an excerpt from training materials used to train interviewers for the compensation claimant survey:

Recognize and respond to safety issues and signs of psychological distress during the interview. People exhibit distress in different ways. Victims may verbally express their distress but there may also be non-verbal indicators. Listen for changes in the victim's demeanor during the interview, including tension in the voice; changes in the volume used to answer questions (this may include talking louder as the interview progresses, or talking softer); crying; reluctance to answer the questions; and shakiness in the voice. If there are any signs of distress, ask the victim if she/he is becoming upset. If she/he says yes, ask the victim if she/he wants to stop the interview or continue it at a later date. Also ask the victim if she/he feels safe. If she/he says no, discontinue the interview and advise the victim to call 911 or go somewhere where they will feel safe. Further, give the victim NOVA's 800 number (1-800-try-nova) to get information on local services with whom they can discuss their feeling and concerns.

As the interviewer, you may independently determine there is a safety or privacy issue, such as someone yelling in the background. In that case, immediately terminate the interview and ask the victim if a researcher may contact her/him in the future to complete the interview.

A detailed description of interviewer training procedures, as used in our survey of compensation claimants, is attached. This protocol will be adapted to the assistance client survey. Interviewers are monitored and supervised throughout the course of the survey, and regular team meetings are held to address questions and issues that arise. All staff who work on this project, including the interviewers, sign pledges to maintain the confidentiality of all information obtained through this study.

Getting the Client on the Phone

It is important to make substantial efforts to reach clients, rather than giving up after one or two tries and moving on to the next name, to make sure our sample is broad and representative. We make a total of ten attempts to reach each person on the sample list, with calls being placed at various times of day and different days of the week. The first four calls are made during the day on Saturdays and Sundays, the next four calls from 5:00 to 8:00 weekday evenings (trying different days for each call), and the last two attempts between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm on weekdays (different days for each call). If we get a recording that the number has been disconnected, or someone tells us the client is no longer at that number and doesn't have the new number, we call directory assistance.

When attempting to reach the person who worked with a victim service program, we take several precautions to protect her/his privacy and safety. First, we never leave messages on answering machines. Second, we do not block caller ID, because our calls register as "San Diego Association of Governments," and we feel this would not raise the suspicions that a blocked ID might. In the worst case scenario, we would not want to leave a blocked ID that an abusive husband might assume is the victim's boyfriend.

If our call is answered by another person and the victim is not available, we try to find out when would be a good time to call back without leaving any information about the nature of our call. If the person on the phone asks why we are calling or offers to talk to us instead of the victim, we say that we are conducting a national survey on government services, and that we can't talk to anyone else in the house besides the person we asked for because of statistical sampling procedures.

Conducting the Interview

Once we get the victim on the phone we explain that we'd like to do a 15-minute phone survey to hear about their experiences with the victim service program. We tell them we'll send them a check for \$10 to thank them for their time, and get an address where they feel comfortable receiving the check. The check is accompanied by a cover letter on SANDAG letterhead which simply says, "Thank you for your assistance in our survey."

We also discuss safety and privacy issues right up-front. We explain that if at any time the victim feels uncomfortable continuing the interview we can stop and call back later. We can also offer a code phrase that the victim can use if someone comes in the room or picks up another extension and she/he needs to get off the phone right away. This would be something that would provide a good explanation for why she/he was on the phone, a logical ending to the call, and would make sense to someone who later checked the caller ID record, such as, "Like I said, I'm not interested in a government survey. Goodbye." The victim could then answer questions about who had called and why truthfully (to some extent).

We explain that participation in this survey is completely voluntary, can be stopped at any time, and will not have any impact on getting victim services, any court cases that may be ongoing, or anything

else. We also reassure respondents that anything they tell us is kept completely confidential. If it is not convenient to do the survey when we first reach them, we schedule a call-back for a better time. If a client wants to verify that this survey is legitimate we will offer your program's phone number since they are familiar with your program, staff, and services (all your staff who are likely to take these calls should be familiar with the survey).

While we try to encourage people to participate by providing more information or addressing concerns when they seem reluctant, we also respect their right to be heard the first time they say "no," and do not attempt to persuade people who have declined to participate.

Please see the attached for the contact script used in this survey.

Using and Reporting the Data

The answers we're given in the survey will be coded numerically and used in aggregate statistical analyses. Results will never be publicly reported in a way that would identify the state, service program, or client. Both electronic and paper copies of any documents containing any identifying information will be handled in such a way as to ensure confidentiality (by restricting access to project staff pledged to confidentiality, by making sure electronic files are not stored on shared drives or drives where public back-ups are made, etc.). When documents containing any identifying information need to be exchanged between the Urban Institute and SANDAG, they will be exchanged in a way that protects the privacy of the information (i.e., by fedexed disk rather than through e-mail).

Please see the attachments for the Data Confidentiality and Security Assurance, which has been approved by the Urban Institute's Institutional Review Board, and the Privacy Certification, on file with our federal funder, the National Institute of Justice.

Pre-Release Consent Procedures

Some victim assistance programs may not feel comfortable releasing client's names to us without the client's prior consent. In that case the program staff person who is serving as our Site Evaluation Coordinator (SEC) may need to contact recent clients to explain the study and ascertain their interest in being contacted by one of our interviewers to conduct the survey. **We have developed three documents to use in identifying the sample and making the consent contract before releasing names to us. These include a sampling log to document sampling procedures; a contact log to document attempts to contact sampled clients; and a contact script to use when speaking with clients.** We are also providing multiple color-coded copies of these documents, attached.

In addition, the SEC at your program will work closely with SANDAG staff, who will provide technical support during sample selection and consent contact periods, including consideration of caller ID issues. SANDAG staff will be in touch with you to set up channels of communication for the sampling and consent processes.

Our goal is to complete surveys with 40 program clients. We are asking programs that can release clients' names and contact information to us without first obtaining the clients' permission to provide us with information on 125 cases. This estimate assumes that SANDAG staff administering the phone survey reach about 40% of sampled clients, and that about 80% of those agree to participate (the rates we've found in the compensation claimant survey). **When programs contact clients to get their consent before releasing their information to us, we anticipate needing about 60 names and phone numbers of people who have already agreed to participate in the survey**, in order to reach and complete surveys with 40 clients (allowing for some we'll never catch at home and others who may change their minds).

Thank you very much for your participation in our survey efforts, and we look forward to working with you.

Attachment 2: Sampling Log

Thanks very much for your assistance on our survey of clients who have received services from your program. We are conducting brief phone interviews with adult crime victims (or adults who have worked with your program on behalf of minor victims) to identify strengths of services provided and what additional services are needed. We want to talk with people while their memories are still fresh. That is, within about 12 months of receiving services from your program. At the same time, we want to avoid creating the misunderstanding that survey participation will affect service provision, so we want to contact those who have not been actively involved with your program within the last 3 months or so. To make sure we get a broad, representative sampling of your clients, no other selection criteria should be used.

Programs organize their client records in different ways. If you would like some assistance in identifying the best way to search your records using these selection criteria, you can contact Lori Jones of SANDAG (619-595-5329; ljo@sandag.org) or Lisa Newmark of the Urban Institute (202-261-5566; lnewmark@ui.urban.org) and we'd be happy to talk this over with you.

Please complete one of these forms for each case reviewed for sample selection, whether the case is actually selected into the sample or not (for statistical purposes, we need to know about cases not selected as well as those who were selected for the survey).

Victim Information:

Age: 17 or younger 18-25 26-39 40-59 60+

Race/ethnicity: White, non-Hispanic Hispanic/Latino(a) Black/Afr.-Amer.
(check one) Native American Asian/Pacific Islander Other: _____

Sex: Male Female

Type of Crime: Child physical and/or sexual abuse Domestic/family abuse

- (check all that apply)**
- Adult sexual assault
 - DUI/DWI
 - Physical assault (non-domestic)
 - Financial exploitation (e.g., fraud)
 - Other: _____
 - Adult survivor of child abuse
 - Homicide
 - Robbery or burglary

Was the crime bias or hate-motivated? yes no

Relationship between Crime Victim and Program Client:

- Client is victim Client is victim's survivor (i.e., homicide, drunk driving fatality)
- Client is victim's parent, other family member, or guardian

If Client is NOT the Victim, Please Provide Client Information:

Age: 17 or younger 18-25 26-39 40-59 60+

Race/ethnicity: White, non-Hispanic Hispanic/Latino(a) Black/Afr.-Amer.
(check one) Native American Asian/Pacific Islander Other: _____

Sex: Male Female

Selection Information:

- Client was selected for phone contact (please provide Contact Information, below)
- Client was not selected for phone contact (do not provide Contact Information but please supply reason(s) client wasn't selected)

Reasons for Non-Selection: (check all that apply)

- Client still actively receiving services from this program
- Last contact with client was more than a year ago
- No contact information available on this client
- Client has specifically requested not to be contacted by this program
- Other: please explain in detail: _____

Client Contact Information:

Name: _____

Phone(s): _____

Other Contact Information (names and phone numbers of others who could help reach the client):

Attachment 3: Contact Log

Please fill out one of these forms, documenting your attempts to reach clients by phone to explain the survey and ask their permission to release their names to us, for each client selected for phone contact. Please refer to the Consent Contact Script for what to say when you get a client on the line.

Please make an initial 5 attempts (if necessary) to reach a client by phone. Be sure to call at different times of day and different days of the week. If you get a recording that the number has been disconnected, or someone tells you the client is no longer at that number and doesn't have a new number, please call directory assistance. If you still haven't gotten the client after 5 attempts, please make several attempts to reach the person(s) listed in your records who the client has provided for contact purposes. Because it is very important to reach as many clients as possible for this survey, we would appreciate it very much if you would make a total of 10 attempts to reach clients by phone (if necessary).

Client's Name: _____

Client's Phone(s): _____

Other Contact Info: _____

Attempt #1:

Who you called: client client's contact person

Date of call: _____

Day of week: Sat. Sun. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thur. Fri.

Time of day: Morning (9am–noon) Afternoon (noon – 5pm) Evening (5 – 9pm)

Outcome of call:

No answer, busy signal, or answering machine

Client wasn't available or couldn't discuss survey at that time, was told to call back later at:

Person or machine said client has new number: _____

Person or machine said client is no longer at number and new number is not available, so called directory asst.: no number available got new number: _____

Client authorized release of name and phone number to SANDAG for survey contact. Best time to call: _____

Client has special needs for survey contact: Spanish-speaking interviewer

Other language: _____ TDD

Other needs: _____

Client declined to authorize release of name and phone number for survey

Attempt # 2:

Who you called: client client's contact person

Date of call: _____

Day of week: Sat. Sun. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thurs. Fri.

Time of day: Morning (9 am- noon) Afternoon (noon- 5pm) Evening (5-9pm)

Outcome of call:

No answer, busy signal, or answering machine

Client wasn't available or couldn't discuss survey at that time, was told to call back later at:

 Person or machine said client has new number: _____

Person or machine said client is no longer at number and new number is not available, so called directory asst.: no number available got new number: _____

Client authorized release of name and phone number to SANDAG for survey contact. Best time to call: _____

Client has special needs for survey contact: Spanish- speaking interviewer

Other language: _____ TDD

Other needs: _____

Client declined to authorize release of name and phone number for survey

Attempt #3:

Who you called: client client's contact person

Date of call: _____

Day of week: Sat. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thurs. Fri.

Time of day: Morning (9am- noon) Afternoon (noon- 5pm) Evening (5-9pm)

Outcome of call:

No answer, busy signal, or answering machine

Client wasn't available or couldn't discuss survey at time, was told to call back later at:

 Person or machine said client has new number: _____

Person machine said client is no longer at number and new number is not available, so called directory asst.: no number got new number: _____

Client authorized release of name and phone number to SANDAG for survey contact. Best time to call: _____

- Client has special needs for survey contact: Spanish- speaking interviewer
 Other language: _____ TDD
 Other needs: _____
- Client declined to authorize release of phone number for survey

Attempt #4:

Who you called: client client's contact person

Date of call: _____

Day of week: Sat. Sun. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thurs. Fri.

Time of day: Morning (9 am- noon) Afternoon (noon- 5pm) Evening (5-9pm)

Outcome of call:

- No answer, busy signal, or answering machine
 Client wasn't available or couldn't discuss survey at that time, was told to call back later at:

- _____
 Person or machine said client has new number: _____
 Person or machine said client is no longer at number and new number is not available, so called directory asst.: no number available got new number: _____
 Client authorized release of name and phone number to SANDAG for survey contact. Best time to call: _____

- Client has special needs for survey contact: Spanish- speaking interviewer
 Other language: _____ TDD
 Other needs: _____
- Client declined to authorize release of name and phone number for survey

Attempt #5:

Who you called: client client's contact person

Date of call: _____

Day of week: Sat. Sun. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thurs. Fri.

Time of day: Morning (9 am- noon) Afternoon (noon- 5pm) Evening (5-9pm)

Outcome of call:

- No answer, busy signal, or answering machine
 Client wasn't available or couldn't discuss survey at that time, was told to call back later at:

- _____
 Person or machine said client has new number: _____

- Person or machine said client is no longer at number and new number is not available, so called directory asst.: no number available got new number: _____
- Client authorized release of name and phone number to SANDAG for survey contact. Best time to call: _____
- Client has special needs for survey contact: Spanish- speaking interviewer
- Other language: _____ TDD
- Other needs: _____
- Client declined to authorize release of name and phone number for survey

Attempt #6:

Who you called: client client's contact person

Date of call: _____

Day of week: Sat. Sun. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thurs. Fri.

Time of day: Morning (9 am- noon) Afternoon (noon- 5pm) Evening (5-9pm)

Outcome of call:

- No answer, busy signal, or answering machine
- Client wasn't available or couldn't discuss survey at that time, was told to call back later at: _____

- Person or machine said client has new number: _____
- Person or machine said client is no longer at number and new number is not available, so called directory asst.: no number available got new number: _____
- Client authorized release of name and phone number to SANDAG for survey contact. Best time to call: _____
- Client has special needs for survey contact: Spanish- speaking interviewer
- Other language: _____ TDD
- Other needs: _____
- Client declined to authorize release of name and phone number for survey

Attempt #7:

Who you called: client client's contact person

Date of call: _____

Day of week: Sat. Sun. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thurs. Fri.

Time of day: Morning (9 am- noon) Afternoon (noon- 5pm) Evening (5-9pm)

Outcome of call:

- No answer, busy signal, or answering machine
- Client wasn't available or couldn't discuss survey at that time, was told to call back later at: _____

- Person or machine said client has new number: _____
 Person or machine said client is no longer at number and new number is not available, so called directory asst.: no number available got new number: _____
 Client authorized release of name and phone number to SANDAG for survey contact. Best time to call: _____
 Client has special needs for survey contact: Spanish- speaking interviewer
 Other language: _____ TDD
 Other needs: _____
 Client declined to authorize release of name and phone number for survey

Attempt #8:

Who you called: client client's contact person

Date of call: _____

Day of week: Sat. Sun. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thurs. Fri.

Time of day: Morning (9 am- noon) Afternoon (noon- 5pm) Evening (5-9pm)

Outcome of call:

- No answer, busy signal, or answering machine
 Client wasn't available or couldn't discuss survey at that time, was told to call back later at:

- Person or machine said client has new number: _____
 Person or machine said client is no longer at number and new number is not available, so called directory asst.: no number available got new number: _____
 Client authorized release of name and phone number to SANDAG for survey contact. Best time to call: _____
 Client has special needs for survey contact: Spanish- speaking interviewer
 Other language: _____ TDD
 Other needs: _____
 Client declined to authorize release of name and phone number for survey

Attempt # 9:

Who you called: client client's contact person

Date of call: _____

Day of week: Sat. Sun. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thurs. Fri.

Time of day: Morning (9 am- noon) Afternoon (noon- 5pm) Evening (5-9pm)

Outcome of call:

- No answer, busy signal, or answering machine

Client wasn't available or couldn't discuss survey at that time, was told to call back later at:

 Person or machine said client has new number: _____

Person or machine said client is no longer at number and new number is not available, so called directory asst.: no number available got new number: _____

Client authorized release of name and phone number to SANDAG for survey contact. Best time to call: _____

Client has special needs for survey contact: Spanish- speaking interviewer

Other language: _____ TDD

Other needs: _____

Client declined to authorize release of name and phone number for survey

Attempt # 10:

Who you called: client client's contact person

Date of call: _____

Day of week: Sat. Sun. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thurs. Fri.

Time of day: Morning (9 am- noon) Afternoon (noon- 5pm) Evening (5-9pm)

Outcome of call:

No answer, busy signal, or answering machine

Client wasn't available or couldn't discuss survey at that time, was told to call back later at:

 Person or machine said client has new number: _____

Person or machine said client is no longer at number and new number is not available, so called directory asst.: no number available got new number: _____

Client authorized release of name and phone number to SANDAG for survey contact. Best time to call: _____

Client has special needs for survey contact: Spanish- speaking interviewer

Other language: _____ TDD

Other needs: _____

Client declined to authorize release of name and phone number for survey

Attachment 4: Consent Contact Script

Hello, may I please speak with <client>?

If temporarily unavailable: When would be a good time for me to call back? *Record this information on contact log.*

If no longer reachable at this number: Do you know how I could get in touch with <client>?
Record new contact information, if available, on contact log.

When client is on the line:

Hi, my name is <first name> and I'm calling from <name of your program>. I'm calling to tell you about a telephone survey of crime victims being done as part of a study funded by the U.S. Department of Justice. The survey is being done by the San Diego Association of Governments in California. The purpose is to get clients' opinions about the services they received and what else should be done to help victims, to try to improve services. The phone survey takes about 15 to 20 minutes, and you'll be mailed a check for \$10 to thank you for participating.

If you choose to participate, your answers will be kept completely confidential. No one at my program, at any other victim service program, or in the court system will be told anything you said. Your participation is voluntary and will not in any way affect any services you may be receiving or any court cases that may be going on. If you're interested in participating, I'll give your name and phone number to SANDAG so they can contact you. I won't release any identifying information about you without your permission. Would you like SANDAG to contact you about the survey?

If questions or hesitation, refer to attached Q&A.

If agreed: Thank you very much, SANDAG should be calling you in the next several weeks. What's the best time for them to reach you? Record this information on contact log.

If refused: Thank you for your time.

Likely Questions and Answers

- What organization is doing the survey? The San Diego Association of Governments in San Diego, California. They have a grant from the Justice Department to do this study.
- Who's the federal sponsor of this study? The U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C.
- Are you trying to sell me something? This is **not** a sales call. (Share this information any time you think that the claimant is suspicious.)
- What information will you release about me? We will only give SANDAG your name and phone number with your permission. If you say no, then I won't release any information that identifies you to SANDAG. We're also providing SANDAG with clients' age, sex, race/ethnicity, and type of crime for statistical purposes. Information about you, and information you give in the survey, will be used for research purposes only. SANDAG guarantees confidentiality and will never use your name in any of their reports or release your name or any other information about you to anyone outside the research project team.
- How many people are they surveying? SANDAG is calling several hundred people who have received victim assistance services in each of six states. The more people who participate in the survey, the more useful the findings will be to those who provide victim services.
- Why should I do this? Feedback from you and others who have used crime victims' services is very important. Victims themselves know best what services they need and how services can be most useful to them. Your insights will be combined with those of many other victims participating in our phone survey, and the findings will offer valuable guidance to people to

provide victim services, and agencies who fund those services. Improvements in services to victims will help many future victims recover from the crime more quickly and more completely.